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55th year of publication

Partners offers hands-on involvement to business people

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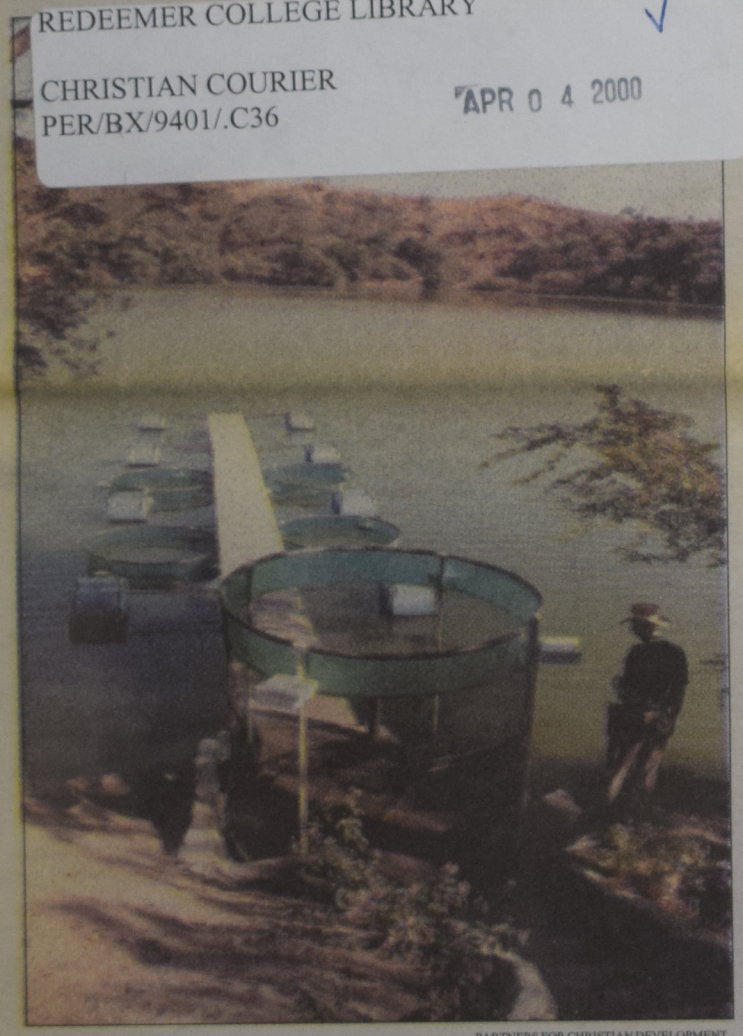

PARTNERS FOR CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

A fish-farming project in El Salvador run by Partners.

Alan Doerksen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Often successful business people are asked for donations of money to support relief work in developing countries. But some of them get tired of this, and would prefer to be asked to help out with their skills and talents rather than just writing a cheque. That's one main reason why Partners for Christian Development (PCD) got started.

"The idea was generated in the early '90s," explains Doug Seebeck, the agency's executive director. "The original core group were all CRC members and supporters." These business people asked themselves, "Our role is usually seen as providing money.... Is there a way we can do more?... There's a need in the business community to have a real role, not just a financial role."

After some initial pilot projects in Kenya, in the early 1990s, Partners was officially formed in 1994, says Seebeck, as an associate organization of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). Partners does "major donor development for CRWRC," he explains. Today, Partners has 27 different chapters across the U.S.

Seebeck notes that Rick De Graaf, of CRWRC Canada, "has a goal of getting groups started in Canada." Partners is also building a partnership with the Canadian Christian Business Federation. The agency has chapters in other countries, such as Kenya and Haiti. Seebeck, who traveled to South Africa in early March, says, "We're hoping to start three chapters in South Africa.... Partners wants to collaborate with anyone who wants to further this cause."

Creative tension

Seebeck views Partners' main role as "mobilizing the business community." At first, there was some tension between business people connected with Partners and the development workers of CRWRC, admits Seebeck. "The first obstacle was both within the business person's mind and the CRWRC person's mind of not understanding each other. There's a certain amount of impatience from business people for 'social workers.'" There are differences between "the entrepreneurial way business people carry things out and the way non-profits do," he adds.

But in 1997, Partners went through a visioning process which "broke a lot of that down."

Although Partners started with Christian Reformed roots, it now has members from other faith backgrounds, such as Catholics, Baptists and Jews. This year, Partners plans to reach beyond the business community and encourage pastors to attend its annual conference, which will take place at Dordt College, in Sioux Center, Iowa, on June 1 and 2. Seminars will include how to manage a church, how to manage conflict, and how to utilize business people in a local church.

Recently, Partners has been developing a project in Haiti. Last June, four Haitian business men were invited to Partners' latest annual conference. Before the conference, they had not had the idea that business people could do ministry work, says Seebeck. "To be told that they have a spiritual gift and [can] target their gifts is unbelievably powerful."

By last October, the Haitian businessmen had started three micro-enterprise programs. In

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Evangelicalism is North American pietism, says Mouw

MARIAN VAN TIL

Dr. Richard Mouw...

Peter Schuurman

ANCASTER, Ont. – Pietism, not unlike that of Abraham Kuyper and the common folk of his time, is alive and well in North America, suggested Dr. Richard Mouw, and it's called evangelicalism.

The title of the all day annual Minister's Conference was "Reformed and Evangelical Together," and the speaker was Dr. Richard Mouw, author of a number of books including *Consulting the Faithful*, and *Uncommon Decency*. About 120-odd pastors from the Southern Ontario region gathered to hear him in the auditorium of Redeemer College, which, as President Cooper said in his introduction, happens to be a rapidly growing "Reformed and evangelical" university. In the first lecture, "Calvinists on the Sawdust Trail — Slippery Slope?" Mouw spoke as an evangelical

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News

Evangelicalism a grassroots reaction to mainline Christianity: Mouw

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Calvinist — as the President of the largest evangelical seminary in North America — Fuller Theological Seminary. The sawdust trail, he explained, was the path of sawdust that led from the makeshift pew to the altar under the old revival tents. It is a symbol of personal religion, of revival, of calling sinners to the foot of the cross.

Pietist roots

Evangelicalism he defined as the pietistic movement in North America that is a grass roots reaction to highly intellectual mainline Christianity. "Those who speak of being born again, accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, focusing on the heart as opposed to the head, and who emphasize the doctrines that rational Christianity downplays such as the authority of Scripture," said Mouw, "these are the evangelicals — the task-oriented, evangelistically focused groups." Like the old house meetings and conventicles at the turn of the 20th century in Holland, the common folk are organizing themselves in small groups so they can be nurtured in true godliness rather than be lost in the large religious institutions where reason has become the highest court of appeal.

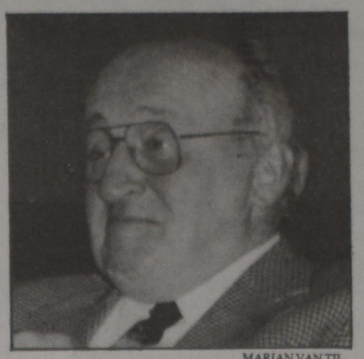
Mouw went on to list the three dangerous tendencies of pietism, as described in Stoeffler's book *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (1965): anti-intellectualism, otherworldliness, and a separatistic spirit. As real as these dangers are, said Mouw, "they are all rooted in positive impulses." These impulses include the desire to avoid rationalist reductionism, this-worldly preoccupation, and unnuanced inclusivism and promiscuous ecumenicity. The main thing, he insisted, was promoting the cause of the gospel, the "evangel."

Mainline elites may be off deliberating global church councils and such, but in the meantime evangelicals are mobilizing via radio, para-church organizations, Christian colleges and all sorts of conferences — like Promise Keepers. "People are looking for spiritual nurture," said Mouw, and evangelicalism is offering them something.

Mouw's mixed heritage

Mouw spoke quite personally about his own roots. He was baptised as a baby in the Reformed church but his father remained in the pew during the ceremony because he had been saved through a dispensationalist mission and he could not accept infant baptism. So Mouw himself wandered through various Reformed and evangelical circles as he grew up, and his father, later on in life, actually became an RCA pastor.

Mouw expressed his delight for the Canons of Dordt (and he showed the audience his well-worn personal copy which he had with him). "It's the only Reformed confession to mention evangelism," he explained, "it says we must 'promiscuously and without distinction preach the gospel of Christ.' That's the only instance in which Calvinists will endorse promiscuity." (Mouw's joke is a reference to an older translation of the second main point, article five where it reads that "the promise of the gospel. . . must be declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people.")



MARIAN VAN TIL

"I've been called 'an Abraham Kuyper on Prozac,'" Mouw joked.

Reformed nervousness

The problem is, said Mouw, quoting a Dutch Reformed church member: "If someone converted and came to our church, what would we do with them?" Reformed Christians are often nervous when it comes to evangelicals, continued Mouw. This is because of certain ethnic habits and mores (like drinking and smoking), because Dutch pietism doesn't include the anti-intellectual streak that we see in America, and because of various confessional concerns: they have no sacramentology, no ecclesiology, and not least of all, they are Arminian.

In response to this nervousness, Mouw quotes from Charles Spurgeon's *"In Defense of Calvinism,"* where Spurgeon says at the heart of the Christian faith is nothing less than "Salvation is of the Lord." Mouw says he can't see too many evangelicals disagreeing with that. "I teach black Pentecostals and Korean Methodists. We have representatives of over 60 nations at our seminary. And they have never heard of the Canons of Dordt. But, back in their home countries, they risk their lives to say, 'Salvation is of the Lord.' And if they knew the Heidelberg Cathechism, I have no doubt they would say along with us, 'My only comfort in life and in death is that I am not my own, but belong body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ....'"

Evangelical challenge

Mouw's second talk was entitled "An Agenda for Mutual Enrichment" in which he made a number of blanket statements to guide Reformed-Evangelical cooperation. First, he said, we need to explore new forms of congregational life — which includes allowing new worship resources to challenge our taken-for-granted definitions of worship. "We need to ask about everything: Is this a good way of gathering and perfecting the saints?" suggested Mouw. (Ironically, except for the student solo "How Great Thou Art" the only songs that were sung at the conference were hymns from the 19th century.)

Second, Mouw maintained that we need to learn what it means to be a missionary church — how to reach the "lost tribes" of our own culture — like the skin heads and other young people who may never have heard the gospel. "We need to re-think denominational identity, too," he continued, "which includes flattening out the structure of the church and building on trans-denominational co-operative efforts."

Another general statement he offered the pastors was that we need to think together about our relationship to larger culture. There should be a seeker sensitive dimension to church life, and the language we use, for example, should be considerate of the audience — especially on very sensitive issues like homosexuality.

Mouw ended with a moving call to keep the confessional heritage alive. Evangelicalism suffers from a form of amnesia, he said, and we need to keep our history and heritage alive in a world that seems to disdain the written word.

"'Evangelical' should remain an adjective and not a noun," said Mouw. "It is a set of correctives, not a complete theology, dedicated to the primacy of piety."

Mutual enrichment

In response to a comment from the audience, Mouw agreed that Dutch Calvinists need to learn to share their personal faith journey, not to mention learning to tell their children they love them. "Being a father is a little like being a distant God," he remarked. "We need more Jesus."

Later, I asked Mouw what approach the community of CC might take towards evangelicalism. "A ministry of reassurance," he replied. "Not just speaking 'to' them, reminding them of broader Kingdom concerns, but 'standing alongside' them and being a nurturing, helping voice. To be more willing to say what you can genuinely share about your faith in Jesus. To establish credibility, we must affirm our solidarity before we address our criticisms."

Positive response

The response was mildly positive from the audience. "He challenged us to look in new directions and move beyond our boundaries," said Kevin DeRaaf, pastor at First CRC, Owen Sound. Mary Ann Benjamins, one of the many pastors' wives who also attended, said, "He expresses a love for our confessional background yet challenges us to talk more openly about our faith." "Although he didn't say anything really new," added one pastor from Niagara.

Mouw models what he speaks and writes. In his description of his work between evangelical and Reformed circles, he also mentioned numerous inter-faith discussions he has participated in—with Mormons, Muslims, Wiccans, etc. It became clear that this was a man who builds bridges without compromising his integrity or the call to preach the gospel "promiscuously and without distinction." "I've been called 'an Abraham Kuyper on Prozac,'" he joked. Drugs or no, his style betrays an uncommon decency of its own, as he passionately continues to declare good news in an often uncivil world — Reformed, evangelical, and beyond.

Partners taps into entrepreneurial skills

... continued from page 1

January of this year, they helped organize a dinner for 100 people in Haiti, at which they found new volunteers for their projects. "There was such excitement at that dinner," says Seebeck.

The Haitians have raised funds for a computer centre in Haiti, and have found allies including a Japanese company which has agreed to pay for the centre's third storey.

Eliminating poverty

In a recent brochure, Partners defines its main vision and focus: "We have not only the vision and the will, but also the means to help eliminate poverty, and assist those in need to become all that God intends. We bring the unique skills and experience of Partners' members into full partnership with CRWRC and local organizations around the world to build healthy caring communities in Jesus' name. We envision a world where the love of Jesus is expressed through business and everyone has the opportunity for meaningful, productive employment."

PARTNERS FOR CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

Doug Seebeck

Partners works toward this vision by:

- promoting, affirming and celebrating business and entrepreneurship as an outstanding Christian calling vital for God's Kingdom to be fulfilled;
- networking together with its members in order to better develop God's resources and be faithful stewards of them;
- providing opportunities for its members to become personally involved in creating jobs and opportunities. These partnerships provide access to appropriate technology, competitive capital and mutual learning, mentoring and support.

Partners' strategic goal is: "the creation of sustainable jobs and opportunities throughout the world in areas where many people are unable to escape poverty."

Currently, Partners has projects under way in at least 20 countries. These include water purification and small business development in Bangladesh, small business loans in Indonesia, physical therapy and manufacturing projects in South Africa, and a window and door manufacturing plant in Kosovo.

Partners' approach to development "is the answer to really tackle poverty holistically," Seebeck asserts. "We're just at the tip of the iceberg."

News

A classmate grieves for her classmates

Lauren Knight

GUELPH, Ont. — The longest, and by far the most difficult, week of my life is finally over.

At the age of 16, I had hoped I would never have had to experience anything even remotely like I had this past week. But then again, who would have thought that I would have to bury three of my friends and classmates within three days?

Sunday, March 5th , started out like any other Sunday morning: I went with my family to church. But for some reason, when I got there, my friend who was usually smiling, was not smiling. She motioned for me to talk to her, and as I made my way over to her, I noticed something was wrong.

"Have you heard yet?" she asked. "There was a big car accident in Drayton last night. Three guys from your class were killed. One is in critical care in the hospital."

Overwhelming grief

The emotions that went through me in those few seconds it took her to utter those life-changing words were incredible: disbelief, shock, horror, pain, and overwhelming grief. She read the names to me: Mark Eelkema, Mark VandenBerg and George Vos, all 16 years old and in my grade 11 class. Then the emotions came back, even stronger than before. Tears started flowing, and I started shaking. I needed to sit down. I needed to be held. I wanted to wake up from this nightmare. The three names were more than just names to me; they were friends and classmates. I could still see them smiling, laughing, and just joking around as most teenage guys do.

Questions started forming in my mind. When did this happen? Who was driving? Were the three drinking? Did they suffer? How were their families doing? When were the funerals going to take place? How serious is the one still alive? Will he be okay?

Unbearable pain

Sitting in church that Sunday was the most difficult Sunday I have ever experienced. Sitting in church for that hour was nearly unbearable. I could not sing the praise songs, and was unable to stand. All I could do was sit there and cry. After the service, a group of high school students and parents met in the council room to pray. Tears were flowing as before, prayers were being sent up by the second, and memories of the three killed in that tragic accident all set the scene for that morning. After church when my friends came over, we slowly began to temporarily forget. We thought of other things instead, and the pain was eased. Until we remembered.

At Woodland Christian High the next day, we were not told much more. The driver of the vehicle, Nick, was the one who was still alive. The car had hit a tree, and Mark E. had been killed instantly. The two in the backseat, Mark V. and George, died later at the hospital.

Although it was difficult to come to school and have to think about the accident, it was very comforting to be with those who were mourning with me, and who knew the three guys as I did. Most students went home that afternoon. It was time to think about other things. Many things were done to keep the mind busy: watching TV, playing cards, listening to music, being with close friends. It helped. I did not have to think about the accident, the loss, or the upcoming funerals. There wasn't much you could do to keep your mind busy enough to forget. The story was in the newspapers, but even they got the names wrong in one story. Everything seemed to move on in life, but for me, time stood still. I did not understand how everyone could keep going to work, or do something as usual as grocery shop when so many people were in pain.

Tuesday we were supposed to have regular classes, but it didn't really happen. Teachers were in no mood to teach, and students were in no mood to learn. In most classes, we just sat around, or took walks down the country road beside the school. The shock of the accident had subsided, but the overwhelming pain was still evident.

Tears flowed freely

The funerals were to be on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. They were obviously very difficult times for many, many people. The churches were filled to overflowing. The pastors gave comforting sermons, and the congregation sang with as much enthusiasm as they could muster. Tears flowed freely, and increased as stories from the families were read. It was difficult to be there, but needed nonetheless.

Even for those of us who did not know the three guys very well, the pain of losing three classmates was difficult. Memories would suddenly hit us - their English play presentations, staring contests, annoying singing during classes, projects we did together, drama plays, practical jokes, smiling faces – and at times it seemed unbearable. Memories like those always make me smile, but they also make me cry. Knowing that we would return to the classroom after March Break and see their empty seats was, and still is, at times, unbearable.

The guilt I feel, although unreasonable, is also at times almost unbearable. My sister captures my feelings and hers best this way: "I feel guilty for laughing, for you will never laugh again. I feel guilty for breathing, for your lungs are empty of air. I feel guilty for forgetting for awhile, because I know some people can never forget."

No one was at fault in the accident. No one was to blame. This happened for a reason, and although we will never understand even the slightest bit, we have to trust in God. Nick survived the accident for a reason. Mark, Mark and George did not. God allowed it to happen, and although we ask "why?" repeatedly, we will never understand. We just have to trust.

Knowing that Mark E., Mark V. and George are all in Heaven is the greatest comfort of all. Knowing we do not have to say "good-bye", but "see you later" is the best thing about this week.

"...Everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." (John 3: 15) Because we know this is true, we can say "see you later", and actually mean it. So, Mark, Mark and George, see you later.

Christians unite to pray and fast for world needs during Lent

CC Staff

Pray World! 2000 (PW2000) asks Christians to pray and fast for world needs during the 40-day Lenten season (March 8 to April 16, 2000) as a "millennial gift to Jesus Christ," according to the Internet for Christians newsletter, published by the Gospel Communications Network. Download a PrayWorld! 2000 prayer calendar (Adobe Acrobat format) to use in your daily prayer time and for distribution (available in English, Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Spanish and soon-to-come Hindi). Learn how to promote this great endeavor at the PrayWorld! 2000 Web site and join thousands of believers to pray for our world. World Prayer Advisory Council for this project includes Campus Crusade for Christ, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Mission America, Pray/USA, Waymakers International and other evangelism/prayer organizations listed at the PW2000 Web site. PrayWorld!2000: **http://www.prayworld.org/**

Evangelicals turn off T.V. preachers

NEW YORK, N.Y. (Religion Today) — Many religious people don't like religious television, a survey shows. A poll of 1,000 randomly selected viewers revealed that about one-third of those who consider themselves evangelical Christians don't like Christian TV. That figure jumps to 60 per cent among those who aren't evangelical but consider themselves religious, Religion News Service said. The poll was conducted by Zoetics, a New York firm, on behalf of the Total Living Network, a Christian organization.

Much religious television does not meet the needs of viewers, TLN concluded. It said viewers are overloaded with TV preachers and want more entertaining fare. "It's preaching to the choir," Ken Waters of Pepperdine University said. "There's not enough variety." TLN President Jerry Rose, an Assemblies of God minister, says he is trying to produce innovative religious programming that combines drama and personal interviews.

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Editorial

Three dreamers in exile

Harry der Nederlanden

Jacob, Joseph and Daniel, the three most famous dreamers in the Bible, do their dreaming not from home, from the heart of Israel, but from beyond her boundaries. When Jacob has his dream of angels on a ladder, he has left his parental home; he is fleeing Esau's wrath and backtracking Abraham's journey. Joseph dreamt at home, but his dreams separated him from his brothers and eventually from his entire family. The dreams that made him a savior of his people (and a type of Christ) were dreamt in Egypt. And they were first of all the dreams of Pharaoh. Similarly, Daniel is living in exile when he is called to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream and has the dreams recorded in the book named after him. In the case of Joseph and Daniel, we can almost speak of a blending of gentile and Hebrew dreamers.

ANNE DEVRIES

Pharaoh has a dream about fat and thin cattle, which Joseph later interprets for him.

Dreamers in no-man's-land

Our three dreamers were, thus, all in a kind of no-man's-land, in a state of liminality, that is, a state in which identities are no longer well-defined but in which everything is uncertain. This is true of dreams as such: they arise out of darkness and sleep. We fall through the everyday world of light and clarity, order and purpose, into another realm in which reason exercises little or no control.

When Jacob dreams his dream, he is in such a no-man's land. By exchanging places with his brother Esau and deceiving his father, Jacob has been forced to leave the familiar space of his family. He is fleeing, a man without a home.

He has tried to seize for himself the promises of the covenant. Instead, he now finds himself outside the covenant family travelling in the opposite direction. He is fleeing back to the pagan past, as it were, back along the route Abraham and Isaac were travelling in response to God's call.

When Jacob lies down, he is exhausted. All his efforts and stratagems have come to nothing. He is alone and feels himself abandoned, far from God. Later (28:16) he says that he didn't know that God was in this place. The God of Jacob, at this point, is not one who is everywhere. In this abandoned and depleted state, he falls asleep.

And he has a dream. A dream of angels ascending and descending from heaven to earth and back again.

Does the dream have something to do with Jacob's attempt to scale the heavens by his own wit and wiles? Did he perhaps need to be reduced to this state of helplessness and abandonment?

God comes to Jacob in this no-man's land and renews the covenant promises made to Abraham. It is a four-fold promise: of land, of participation in the covenant lineage, of God's continued care, and of a mediating role in God's great mission to bless all the peoples of the earth.

Jacob, the trickster, the cheat, the coward, the outcast, the homeless one, the solitary lying on his back sound asleep is made the basis of human culture and human history. It is only by God's covenant blessing that culture and history have any meaning.

Superimpose Jacob's dream of a ladder crowded with angels (like an elevator at the Eaton's Centre on sale day) on the image of the Tower of Babel that we meet earlier in Genesis. In trying to acquire God's blessing by his own wit, Jacob was like those earlier towerbuilders. But here at Beth-El he lies flat on his back, levelled, his plans foiled, far from his family. No wonder he doesn't expect to find God in this place.

It's typical, isn't it? We humans betray God, break all connections, make all our own rules, and then we assume that it was God who abandoned us. We make a mess of things and end up in exile. Then we cry: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

We really don't expect God to appear here in the darkness. We build temples and churches for God to appear in. We build orderly homes and families, Christian schools, Christian businesses, Christian political action groups, Christian labor unions – a system of organizations and institutions to act as vehicles of God's blessing. And this is where we expect God to appear. Isn't this what being a covenant God, a faithful God, means? Yes, I think so.

Yet, what of our three dreamers? Think of Joseph: far from his family, sold into slavery, unjustly tossed into prison. Think of Daniel: carried as plunder from a ravaged homeland to a foreign country where magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers advise the king. Like Jacob, they are not in places where you'd expect God to appear. Joseph and Daniel are both ushered into the presence of alien kings. In those days these kings were at least semi-divine. They were embodiments of pagan gods. Far from home, far from covenantally-created culture, Joseph and Daniel discover God in the dreams of these pagan empire builders.

God reveals himself beyond boundaries

This doesn't mean that God appears only outside our sacred spaces. (Some contemporary thinkers seem to have that impression: they seem to think that God hates structures created to honor him.) It means that even out there, beyond the margins, in the distant places where we don't expect God to be, even beyond the boundaries of our consciousness, God is revealing himself.

God reveals himself in our places of worship, in our devotions and prayer, in upright lives, in Christian organizations and in Christian poems and songs. But he also reveals himself in the visionary writing of his enemies: in the writings of Nietzsche, who signed some of his writings as the Antichrist, and in the polemics of Karl Marx, who denounced the Christian faith as a delusion. He also reveals himself in contemporary films like *American Beauty*, a film stained from beginning to end by the crimson of Christ's blood.

All it takes to discern God's presence is a dreamer and a dream interpreter. And the Holy Spirit promises to raise such dreamers up in our midst. Perhaps you yourself are one of them.

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Opinion/Letters

Budget 2000: The good, the bad and the ugly

Margaret Dinsdale

The recent federal budget is remarkable not so much for what it is, but for what it's not. "Long on themes and short on substance" as one political pundit put it, finance minister Paul Martin presented Better Finances, Better Lives to parliament on February 28.

A budget sets the tone for how a family lives, how it pays the bills, houses and feeds its children, pays taxes and saves for the future, against what is earned. If they're one of the lucky ones who hasn't fallen through society's ever-widening cracks, that is. And a national budget determines how we all live.

I was particularly interested in the content as I had appeared as an individual before the finance committee's annual round table discussions last fall and wanted to see if anything on my wish list came to fruition.

Grim stories

I told the committee three rather grim stories, including this one about an older man on a disability pension: "Blinky, whose real name was Findlay Gillis, was a slightly built older man who suffered some sort of neurological disorder, which caused his eyes to constantly blink, hence his nickname. He lived in downtown Toronto.... He was on some sort of disability pension and the major portion of any socializing he did was that a couple of times a week he would frequent a local pub and have a couple of glasses of beer, at the cost of $1.25 each. Then the social service benefit cuts came and he could barely afford this little treat. One of the owners of the pub, Cindy Matthews, would give him the odd free beer. Blinky was painfully shy and a harmless soul and when he could no longer afford to live where he was, Cindy found him a room in a rooming house nearby, helped him move and arranged for his pension cheques to be sent to his new address. But for some reason, he didn't get his cheque. Being too shy or too proud or both to beg for further help, he died alone in his room. The cause was determined to be starvation."

I also told them of a middle-class couple in their seventies, how the wife is dying of a rare, Alzheimer-like brain disease and how they cope despite the lack of home care that was solemnly promised by the government in the last election.

How did the government address such needs in the budget? In terms of its commitment to social housing, Canada is one of the few industrialized countries in the world which does very little in this area. Yet, last winter, ten cities across the country called homelessness a national disaster, and the United Nations has sharply criticized us for this as well.

What did we get? A little bit of money spread over two years was announced in December, but most of it goes to bolster the shelter system. Who wants to live in a shelter with its lack of privacy and acts of violence not to mention the incidence of tuberculosis and head lice? And, as one official put it, this money "...employs middle-class people to whom poor people can come to beg for help." It does not raise our sisters and brothers up but keeps them down.

Why such discrimination against women?

Only about 30 per cent of people applying for Employment Insurance benefits receive them, despite the approximately $21 billion surplus in the fund. And women are assessed at lower rates. As an aside: if we did to blacks or the disabled what we are doing to women in this country right now, we would be blackballed around the world. How do we get away with it?

Health care was another issue and the feds did make $2.5 billion available to the provinces. The problem with this is that it still does not come anywhere near covering the cuts made to provincial transfers five years ago. Interestingly, none of the opposition parties except for the NDP pursued the budget in question period that week, which I find shocking. The NDP were the only ones to call the government to task over health care and other budget issues.

There is one bright light in all this. Paul Martin is giving us not only tax cuts but a restoration of indexing (the adjustment of tax rates with inflation), and he should be commended for that.

We should be just as horrified and appalled that people are dying in the streets of our cities for lack of suitable housing as we are by the ethnic cleansing that is still taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Our hearts and help should go as much to the families living in motel rooms on Kingston Road in Toronto as they do for the flood victims in Mozambique. We should be just as angry at our government's indifference to the suffering of people without adequate health care in our hospitals and emergency wards as we are at the repressive and often brutal dictatorship in Indonesia.

As Christians, we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, without question, without deeming who is the "deserving poor." We are obligated to care for the widow and the orphan. We have no choice but to alleviate suffering wherever and whenever we can. We have to, as Jesus tells us, love God and love our neighbors as ourselves, for these two commandments are the greatest of all. And we have just as much an obligation, I think,to bring our political leadership to the same conclusions.

So, how do we get politicians to listen? One effective method is to write letters to the prime minister, the minister of finance, the health minister and your own MP, as well as your provincial and local politicians. Tell them, in a respectful manner, your concerns and challenge them to action. If we could get our political leadership to put the care and concern for the people as their number one priority, then we most certainly would be doing God's work on earth.

Margaret Dinsdale is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

Re: "Why I left the church"

Thank you so much for the two articles about Christians leaving the church (Christian Courier, March 20, 2000). This is obviously a difficult question for any church to ask itself, but it is tremendously important and vital to consider.

I very much loved reading Jeremy Bridge-Cook's letter to his mom. Jeremy and I were in the same grade at Hamilton District Christian School in the '80s, and I was always curious as to where his path would lead. Thanks, Jeremy, for sharing your journey with the rest of us so honestly. I am grateful to you and Christian Courier for printing this faith-story.

Monica Heeg-Admiral,
Hagersville, ON

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905) 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

Reform MP criticizes government's same-sex legislation

I am writing to inform your readers about the government's same-sex benefits legislation, Bill C-23. Bill C-23 is omnibus legislation which proposes to change 68 federal statutes that refer to marriage, spouse and family. C-23 is specifically intended to extend benefits that had previously been reserved for married couples and families to same-sex couples who cohabit for one year in a "conjugal" or sexual relationship.

Two people who live together and are economically interdependent would *not* qualify for benefits, but two people of the same sex who live together and have sex would. In effect, Bill C-23 is a "benefits for sex" bill which would render marriage and family meaningless in public policy. This is unfortunate, as there is significant empirical evidence about the value of marriage which tends to bring forth the next generation of citizens and produces real, tangible, public policy benefits for society.

Bill C-23 fails to define marriage in legislation, even though Parliament passed a motion on June 8, 1999 to "take all necessary steps" to preserve the definition of marriage as "the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others."

If spousal benefits are not to be limited to heterosexual couples because of their unique role in the procreation and nurturing of children, the government should be required to demonstrate why benefits should be extended based on one's private sexual intimacies and not based on economic dependency. In Bill C-23, the Liberals have refused to do so.

Eric Lowther, MP
(Calgary Centre, Reform)
Official Opposition critic for
Children and Family policy

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Warming up to carbon limits before it is too late

Creation waits...
John Wood

"What were you doing on April 30, 1991, when a series of waves drowned 138,000 people?" Annie Dillard asks in *For the Time Being* (Viking 1999). Waves rise from the sea and recede again. People rise from the earth and recede again. "What will move you to pity?" she wonders. A fair question on the disturbing question of life and the meaning of death. I am reading this book while I ruminate on the latest news of climate change. It is old news to us now, and many wish the subject would simply go away. But there it is again and again, in the paper, or the nightly news, or a neighbor's casual comment on the weather.

A green conscience calling for attention

The toll of death from storms, floods and mudslides overwhelms our senses. Mozambique is the latest of these mind-numbing tragedies. I can't even keep the numbers straight, and seldom try to do so any longer. But can we so easily escape the connection between our daily lives and these events in far off places? The members of Greenpeace are doing everything they can think of to break through our defensive shell and compel us to action. They act like a global conscience, crying out in the background. Their antics have become almost comical. This week in Edmonton it was banners labeling oil companies as "Climate Villains." These gadflies of the corporate sector continue to harangue, but energy projects continue forward. Many people want them simply to go away, or at least to join the process. As one company spokesperson says, "What we'd rather do is work with them. They can give us valuable advice on alternatives. It would just seem more productive to do that." But joining the process is not the point. These protests are not designed to get the company's attention, but ours.

The problem is not in getting companies to pay attention to climate change. It is the general public and governments that are lagging behind. Energy companies are filled with experts in the sciences related to climate change. Most segments of the energy sector have recognized the business opportunity that it represents. Those who fail to plan for new carbon reduction limits will be left behind. In fact a revolution in thinking has been underway in engineering circles for over a decade. There is much more money to be made out of energy efficiency technology and carbon reduction than there is from business as usual. The surge of investment in alternative energy technology and hybrid cars, like the Ballard Industries project in Vancouver, is a clear signal of this change.

Industry goes on a diet

But it isn't just energy companies that are changing. We are at the front end of a materials revolution. Industry is going on a materials and energy diet. Dramatic waste reduction is no longer a new idea in manufacturing, but a standard practice. Ten, 40, 75, or even 100 fold improvements are possible when we completely re-think how manufacturing works. In some places customers no longer buy climate disruptive products like solvents, paper copiers, electricity, or natural gas for heating or air conditioning, or carpets. Rather they purchase services like degreasing, document production, warmth, "coolth", or floor covering. The service provider then decides how best to provide that service. The resulting savings in scale invite new technologies that are far less destructive than before.

Europe shows the way

If this all sounds a bit foreign, it is. North America has lagged behind Europe in marketing these new ideas. We are still mired in public debates over climate and business that are constrained by decades old ideas of how to proceed. Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins have brought us the story in their new book, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (1999, Little, Brown and Co.). The facts are not all in on the exact cause of climate change. But we know more than enough to act today. It is time to leave off our fears and act on what we know is right. This change helps the global climate, it will help our neighbors around the world, and it will help us as well.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Biotech: bye-bye biobucks

Harry der Nederlanden

It's a sad commentary on the way we make money when the threat of justice causes a nosedive on the stock exchange. That's what happened mid-March when U.S. President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair called for public access to the information gathered in mapping the human genetic code.

For more than ten years an international consortium has been cooperating to make this information available for public use. A few years ago, one of the scientists who had been working on the public project started his own company, Celera; using a new method that he'd developed, he raced ahead of the work of the consortium and began patenting the information. Although he promised to make the information available to researchers for a small fee, the patenting of the human genome (DNA) aroused strong protests from scientists. Some have compared it to patenting our knowledge of human anatomy or physiology. Drug companies have also entered the race. The information, it is hoped, will provide clues to many diseases that have genetic components. (See story in CC, Nov. 29, 1999.)

Stock market slide

Some biotech stocks lost more than half their value after the announcement by Blair and Clinton. What's good for the rest of us is, apparently, not good for the bottom line. Some biotech spokesmen hurried to explain that gathering the information is only a small first step. By far the hardest part comes in using it to develop new therapies. It is unclear what will happen to the hundreds of patents already issued on the human genome. It may well be a case of too little too late.

Vaccinated by a potato?

CC Staff

ITHACA, New York — The dividing line between food and medicine has become more porous of late. Some foods, we are constantly being warned, cause medical problems. Others can reverse some ill effects.

Now various laboratories are developing foods that have medicines engineered into them.

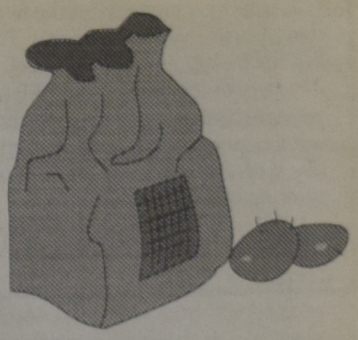
Biotech labs at Cornell University, for example, are trying to build into certain fruits and vegetables vaccines for hepatitis B and some other diseases. Bits of DNA from germs are spliced into the food. When absorbed into the body, they mobilize the body's immune system in the same way a vaccine would. Fruits and vegetables are used because they are eaten raw. Cooking would destroy the effect of the vaccine.

Cure for deadly diarrhea

Another research organization is seeking to create food products that carry a cure for a kind of diarrhea that kills over 3 million children a year. The medical ingredient survives even in dried forms of the food.

In case of a major outbreak, usually in some developing country, bags of a food such as potato flakes could be sent to the stricken area to innoculate large numbers of people in a short time. There would be no need to send in teams of doctors and nurses to do the innoculating.

Researchers at the University of Ottawa are working to develop a strain of rice that contains a protein taken from a virus that causes pneumonia in people with weakened immune systems. At present the amount of "vaccine" the rice carries isn't enough to stimulate the immune system. But it's only a matter of time, researchers say. The rice is designed not for general consumption but only for medical purposes and will be produced under laboratory conditions.



Bags of a medically-treated food such as potato flakes could be sent to a stricken area to innoculate large numbers of people in a short time.

Scientists involved in creating the new varieties of biomed foods say that they will be cheaper to produce than traditional vaccines and that they will also be safer than vaccines produced from animal cells.

Investment in this kind of research is being threatened, however, by the recent furor over genetically modified foods.

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Arts/Media

Church and film censorship: do we want to be educationally challenged?

Bert den Boggende

Invented in the mid-1890s, motion pictures quickly became popular features of vaudeville and music hall programs. The overwhelming majority of people agreed with Thomas Edison that they were only entertainment. In 1915 the American Supreme Court declared them 'mere spectacles,' not conveyors of ideas.

Following consensus, mid-1920s overtures and a report to the Christian Reformed Church's synods classified them as amusements. Nearly as quickly as they became popular with the working classes, civic and religious leaders began voicing objections, some paternalistically arguing that these pictures were not uplifting and therefore threatened to corrupt their improvement programs for the working classes. Scenes of folk dancing and train robbery (*The Great Train Robbery,* an eight minutes long 1903 movie, may be regarded as the real beginning of the motion picture industry) aroused these leaders to call for censorship.

WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA PHOTO

Film editors at work.

Chicago first city for censorship

In 1907 Chicago became the first city implementing censorship and many municipalities and states followed suit. The new industry objected, claiming freedom of speech and press, a claim rejected in 1915 by the American Supreme Court, which stated that the First Amendment did not apply to motion pictures. Since the decision did not clarify *what* could be censored, in 1922 the motion picture industry appointed William Harrison Hays, a Presbyterian elder and president Harding's Postmaster General, to bring greater uniformity to the different standards used by cities and states.

Hays' appointment did not prevent many church leaders from regarding movies as a corrupting amusement. Generally, large denominations favored censorship, while smaller ones often declared them sinful. For instance, the CRC, following the example of Calvin's Geneva condemning worldly amusements as obstacles to a godly life, agreed with a 1926 overture that motion pictures were "contrary to the Word of God, ar the stamp of worldliness, and endanger the spiritual and moral welfare of those who indulge in them." Another overture called for a study committee preparing guidelines "in combatting this evil." Synod appointed a committee, making clear what its direction should be by declaring that it deplored the participation of CRC members in this sinful amusement. In 1928, at a time when *Jazz Singer,* the first "talkie," was receiving acclaim, the CRC synod condemned all movie attendance.

The issue of censorship can best be surveyed through the actions of Roman Catholics, who after 1930 replaced Protestants as the film industry's major critics. More unified than before, the largest American denomination could exert significant pressure. They did so in two ways. First, the publisher Martin Quigley and the Jesuit Daniel Lord wrote a code, which in 1934, slightly modified, became the industry's censorship code. It was administered by Joseph Breen, another Catholic, who could exercise censorship before a major film studio began production. With some alterations the code survived until the mid-1960s.

Second, the Legion of Decency with millions of members who signed a yearly pledge, was established. It was a force to be reckoned with: scores of Legion volunteers censored and classified the films the studios hoped to show in their theatres (they saw more than 16,000 movies!).

While accepting movies as entertainment, Quigley and Lord also insisted that motion pictures had the same objective as other forms of art. Like the 1926 CRC synod, they argued that movies influenced moral behavior; unlike that synod, they felt that films had a special moral obligation. Because the industry objected to age ratings, Lord and Quigley suggested films not be given the same latitude as books, newspapers and plays.

They wrote: "A book describes; a film vividly represents. One presents on a cold page, the other by apparently living people. A book reaches the mind through words merely; a film reaches the eyes and ears through the reproduction of actual events. The reaction of a reader to a book depends largely on the keenness of the reader's imagination; the reaction to a film depends on the vividness of presentation."

Big list of do-nots

They argued that movies should not glorify criminals, prostitutes and adulterers, nor show nudity, excessive violence, white slavery, illegal drugs, lustful kissing, suggestive postures, and childbirth. Vulgarity, profanity and obscenity should not be uttered. Law should not be ridiculed, courts of justice not be presented as unjust, evil not be presented as alluring, and religious subjects should never offend good taste. In addition, scenes of civil strife, miscegenation (sex or marriage between persons of different races), labor-management discord, government corruption and injustice were usually censored.

Initially reasonably successful, censorship soon showed cracks which turned into crevasses. Only major studios needed a seal of approval to have their films shown in major theatre chains; small, independent producers could show their films, as well as foreign films uncensored in the remaining, independent theatres. Gradually Hollywood producers began to object to censorship, and in 1952, when movie attendance was declining, the American Supreme Court reversed its 1915 decision, allowing films the protection of the First Amendment. At its peak about 90 million tickets *per week* were sold in the US, while books by all major literary figures — Hemingway, Steinbeck, etc. — only sold a few million copies *per year*. As a result of the producers' objections, legal decisions, and decline in attendance, censorship became untenable and the code expired in the mid-1960s, although the Legion of Decency struggled on for some time.

CRC stance ignored

By the 1960s the CRC's stance on movie attendance also proved to be untenable: most young people simply ignored it. A report of some forty pages was submitted to synod in 1966. While sympathetic to the condemnation of worldliness, it argued that prohibition was not consistent with Reformed policy. Instead of the fortress mentality of 1928, the report, infused by some Kuyperian ideas, called for interaction with influential institutions like the movie industry. This entailed greater personal responsibility.

Similar to a 1957 papal encyclical, the report stated that there was "a large educational task that must be initiated by responsible agencies at the various levels of life in our Christian community" and that it was "imperative that our Christian community begin to engage in a responsible critique of the film arts."

One response by the Christian community reflects the code of the Legion of Decency. On its website the Christian Film and Television Commission states that it "is dedicated to redeeming the values of the mass media according to biblical principles by influencing media executives to adopt higher standards and by informing and equipping moral people." CFTC, whose supporters take an oath of decency, analyses and classifies films on their moral context, including foul language, violence, sexual activity, nudity, alcohol use, and drug use. However sympathetic one may be with this approach, one question still needs to be raised: Who sets the standards? In this connection it seems useful to keep in mind that the Legion's censors were sometimes much stricter than the Vatican!

Slowly the Reformed community also responded. For instance, Calvin College began offering courses in communication, The *Banner* commenced publishing commentaries, in 1990 Christian Schools International started issuing *MediaStudies,* while *Christian Courier* began reviewing movies.

As letters to the editors indicate, not everyone is satisfied with the educational suggestions. While the fortress set clear boundaries, the 1966 report introduced less distinct demarcations and more possibilities for disagreements. This not only calls for understanding and tolerance, but also for a realization that those we disagree with are attempting to live a godly life.

Bert den Boggende lives in Lacombe,Alta.

Crusty monk makes big dough on t.v.

CC Staff

DALLAS, Texas — A crusty monk who loves to bake bread is a rising TV star. Dominic Garramone, a Benedictine, hosts Baking Bread, a new Public Broadcasting Service program that features his spiritual insights along with his bread-baking, The Dallas Morning News said. The show helps people see that there is spirituality to even mundane tasks.

Making bread is a metaphor for spiritual growth, Garramone said. Kneading the dough represents the physical aspects of life, while the addition of yeast, which enlivens the dough, symbolizes the human need for passion, he said. Dough has to be "rested" and then placed in the fire to be completed, when it is then broken and shared.

Various types of bread represent different types of Christians, he said. A "rye-bread" Christian is distinctive and perseveres in the faith, while a "garlic-bread" Christian is instantly recognized by others. His favorite is banana-nut bread, he said, because the bananas are old and useless but can be made to produce a delicious loaf.

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Church

Open Doors enlisting cyber-warriors

SANTA ANA, Calif. (EP) — Open Doors USA has issued an appeal to American Christians to become "cyber-warriors" by using their computers to participate in the battle to assist the persecuted church.

The ministry that was started more than four decades ago by Brother Andrew, the Dutch-born author of *God's Smuggler*" has launched a thought-provoking new web site to equip American Christians to be involved in praying for and helping some 200 million suffering Christians living in more than 60 countries around the world.

"Open Doors has launched this web site because all around the globe religious persecution is on the rise, endangering the church as never before," explained Terry Madison, US President and CEO of Open Doors. "The litany of horrors that believers withstand for their faith is chilling.

"Only one power can redeem the course of events, and that is the power of God's people being involved as his instruments on this earth. Believers need to 'stand in the gap' for the persecuted, as well as for the persecutors. For every Peter and Paul of the first century, there are millions of Christians facing persecution today," said Madison. "And the best way to stand up for these brothers and sisters in faith is to learn about their plight.

Sensitizing first step

"Without question, sensitizing ourselves to the reality of persecution is the first step toward doing something about it." Madison said that there are many things that American Christians can do to get involved in helping the suffering Church.

"The first priority is to educate yourself on this urgent issue and then spread the news to others," he said. "It is vital that we know the facts so that we can pray intelligently for those who suffer because of their faith, as well as for those who cause the suffering."

Madison also suggested people could organize efforts in their church or small group. "We can also encourage prisoners and workers on the frontline and become an advocate."

He suggested that concerned Christians can write letters to the editor of their local newspaper or email their congressmen and point out the plight of persecuted Christians around the world. The web site gives specific instructions for undertaking these advocacy efforts.

Madison also suggested that believers use the site to learn how they can "go to the frontline of faith yourself and be a Bible courier or minister firsthand on a short-term mission trip."

The site, which can be found at www.opendoorsusa.org also posts a daily devotional inspired by those who have suffered for their faith, plus breaking news stories and prayer requests.

Madison went on to say that Christians in the United States can help by giving financially to strengthen the body of Christ and they can make a secure online donation through the new web site.

Open Doors has created a unique interactive "game" on the web site which it believes will open eyes and hearts to the plight of persecuted Christians.

There are also eyewitness accounts of frontline believers and "A Day in the Life" report from a survivor on the front lines of persecution.

The ministry has included on the site a place where people can take a global "tour" and identify the world's persecution hotspots.

Visitors to the site can check out the variety of books, booklets, videos and other resources available from Open Doors that further educate users to the plight of persecuted Christians. All of them can be ordered online through a secure server.

There is also a link to enable visitors to listen to Open Doors new daily "Frontline World Report" radio news program that is broadcast on radio stations across the country.

Terry Madison concluded by saying, "Millions of Christians face intense persecution for their faith and suffer in silence. They ask believers living in freedom to pray for them as well as for their persecutors. And Almighty God has promised to listen. We hope thousands will log onto our new web site to receive this vital information and be inspired to become further involved."

Indonesian Christians fear slaughter

INDONESIA (Religion Today) — Christians in the Moluccas Islands, Indonesia, fear another attack. Muslims on Halmahera, an island in the north Moluccas, are preparing to "either kill or remove all Christians" from the Galela, Tobelo, and Kao areas of the island, the Uniting Church of Australia said after receiving a fax from a schoolteacher in Tobelo March 13. Members of the Indonesian military are to take part in the operation, the teacher said.

Thousands of Christians are hiding in the thick jungle region of Tobelo, the Uniting Church said. Christians fleeing violence on other parts of Halmaherra and nearby islands have taken refuge there. Efforts to reconcile the Christian and Muslim communities after months of violence have been stopped by Muslim "jihad" fighters from Java and other parts of Indonesia, the Uniting Church reports..

The situation has been inflamed "to the point where Christians believe they will be slaughtered," the church said. Christians in Tobelo are asking how to defend themselves against the heavily armed and better-organized Muslims. "What can we do? How can we prepare ourselves against this?" asked the teacher who sent the fax. The teacher concludes, "All of us are very, very concerned — we ask you to seek ways of supporting us — the Lord bless you."

Thousands of Christians have died in Muslim-Christian violence in the Moluccas since last year, news reports claim. The Uniting Church has asked the United Nations, British Parliament, and Australian government for help.

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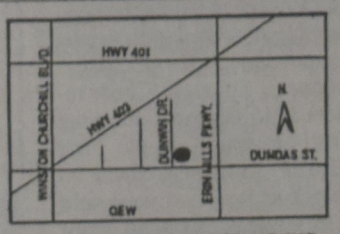

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Bible league dedicates new facility in Russia

CC Staff

MOSCOW, Russia — After three years of opposition and complications, the Bible League opened its new Russian office just outside of Moscow. The new office building/warehouse will headquarter The Bible League's ministry throughout Russia, the agency reports in a press release.

In 1999, The Bible League placed more than 780,000 Scriptures in Russia; 12,450 Russians were involved in Bible studies; and 152 new churches were started by Bible League-trained church planters.

Construction of the new building was not simple; various complications and opposition turned it into a three-year process. But God graciously provided answers, and dedication for the new facility took place in early January. The new facility will replace a small two-room apartment that served as an office, while rented warehouse space was in a different location.

The Bible League's Rev. Waldemar Kurz asks that the evangelical community remember the people of Russia in their prayers. After suffering the hardships of Communism, they now live in near economic collapse. Some Russians see cause for hope in the youth, ambition, and exposure to the West of their new acting President, Vladimir Putin. While some of Putin's statements showing an openness to varied religious beliefs have given cause for encouragement among Russian believers, his agenda remains unknown at this point. The upcoming Russian elections have been moved to March 26.

No simple solutions

Another hardship for the Russian people is the conflict in Chechnya that has cost so many lives. "There is no simple solution which will bring together the decades of hostility between the two worldviews of Christianity and Islam," says Rev. Kurz.

Many Russians view the Chechens as responsible for fatal bombings and other acts of terrorism. "There is great hostility toward the Chechens for the costs both in human life and in resources for this straggling country," asserts Rev. Kurz. "Only God can bring peace to that part of the world — humanly, it is impossible."

The Bible League believes that in order for God to work in the hearts of men, they must first have His Word. The Bible League is committed to providing Scriptures and training to the people of Russia so that they can be brought into the fellowship of Christ and His Church.

Hundreds killed in Muslim-Christian fighting in Nigeria

CC Staff (with files from EP and RNS)

Nigerian President Olsegun Obasanjo went on national television March 1 to plead with his people, both Muslim and Christian, to stop the barbarism. He called on the people to "return to the fundamental faith that life, all life, is sacred."

Hundreds of people, perhaps as many as 300, died in four days of clashes between Christians and Muslims that began in the northern city of Kaduna. Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation; its population of 108 million is almost evenly divided between Christians and Muslims.

The country was ruled by Muslim military leaders for almost 20 years, but last year elected a Christian president. Tensions between Christians and Muslims were exacerbated by the return of Christian schools, confiscated in 1977, to their former owners.

In addition, some predominantly Muslim states have been implementing Islamic law, called sharia, and others were planning to follow suit. Christians feared this would lead to persecution. In Zamfara state, the first to implement sharia, 20 Christians are awaiting trial for violations of Islamic law, despite assurances that it would not be applied to Christians.

The riots in the city of Kaduna, the capital of Kaduna state, broke out when 5,000 Christians joined in a protest march against a proposal to adopt sharia in their state, which is 40 per cent Christian. Thousands have been left homeless by the violence, and at least 36 churches and several mosques, including a Roman Catholic cathedral and the city's main mosque, have been destroyed.

Nigerian leaders from the mostly Muslim north have agreed to back away from calls for Islamic law in an attempt to restore the peace.

"What I saw was disheartening and upsetting," said President Obasanjo. "The devastation was so massive, it seemed as though Kaduna had overnight been turned into a battlefield. I could not believe that Nigerians were capable of such barbarism against one another."

The sign of the cross

Chapter & Verse

Mary S. Hulst Antonides

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' . . .

Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?' I answered, 'Sir, you know.'

And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

"Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads."

Revelation 7:9-10,13-14; 14:1

Last night we held our Ash Wednesday service. The liturgy was simple, the music unadorned. We followed a very traditional order of worship: the reading of scripture, the singing of Lenten hymns, the imposition of ashes, an offering for the benevolence fund.

As the worshippers came forward to receive the sign of the cross on their foreheads, I spoke this simple phrase over and over again: "Repent," downward stroke of ash with my thumb, "and believe the gospel," a smear from left to right. As I knew the majority of the worshippers, I spoke their names to them during the imposition: "Emily, repent and believe the gospel." "Jim, repent and believe the gospel."

Affirmation and affection

They came before me one by one, knelt down and lifted their chins toward me, eyes looking at mine. "Repent," I said again and again, "and believe the gospel." As the faces came toward me, I realized that this is truly the heart of my calling: to place on others the sign of the cross and to call them to repentance and belief. Among those worshipping were young children, older saints, persons in hurting marriages, people dealing with addictions, a few with debilitating diseases, some who have survived cancer. I have walked with many of these people, cried with some, prayed with most. As they came and knelt before me to receive the ashy cross on their foreheads, I experienced not only an affirmation of what I do, but also a deep affection for those with whom I do it.

I love these people. And out of that love comes a deep desire for them to truly "repent and believe the gospel." I want them to leave behind the habits and hurts that hold them back and seize new life in Jesus Christ. I want them to know the promise that in Jesus Christ they are truly forgiven. I want them to know that the gospel is true, that heaven is real, that God loves them with an everlasting love.

Troubled by ashes

After the service, one of our deacons mentioned how it troubled her to see the dark smear of ashes on the forehead of her husband. After many years of marriage she and her husband remain very much in love, which is obvious to those who are around them for any length of time. "It just troubles me," she said, with a voice that betrayed her devotion to her spouse. "And to see it on the foreheads of children . . ." she paused. "It makes me realize that we are all in the same spot."

All dirty with sin. All in need of grace and forgiveness. As I looked out over the congregation after the imposition of ashes, I saw that, too: the commonality of our sin. But I also saw something else: each person marked with a cross. There was not a face there that was empty of the sign; all were marked. Part of our liturgy that evening had included a child asking questions about the ritual of ashes. One question was, "Why are the ashes placed on the forehead?" The answer: "Because in the Bible a mark on the forehead is a symbol of a person's ownership. Having our foreheads marked with the sign of a cross symbolizes that the person belongs to Jesus Christ, who died on a cross."

As I looked at my parishioners, my friends, I saw the sign of the cross. I saw them marked as God's own. The dark smudge did not remind me of sin, it reminded me of the One who has claimed us for his own and has taken all of our dirty smears and smudges away. It was wonderfully comforting.

When I arrived home, my husband met me in the kitchen, still marked with the sign. He had forgotten it was there until he reached up to scratch an itch. His fingers were blackened and he quickly proceeded to wash his hands and then his forehead. "This comes off pretty easily," he said. Just wait, I thought, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

Rev. Mary S. Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Evangelical Fellowship protests violence against Christians

OTTAWA, Canada (EP) — The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) called for a letter writing campaign on Feb. 9 to ensure the safety of Christians in areas of Egypt and Indonesia where incidents of violence against Christians were recently reported. The EFC's Religious Liberty Commission has also written to the presidents of both countries to express its concern about increasing levels of religiously motivated violence in the Indonesian province of Maluku and the Egyptian town of el-Kosheh.

The RLC has appealed to Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak to ensure an investigation into reports that the local police force in the village of el-Kosheh stood by as Muslim mobs stormed homes, beat and killed Christians. Twenty Christians and one Muslim person died in this conflict, which began as a dispute between a Christian shopkeeper and a Muslim person.

El-Kosheh made international headlines in 1998 when its police force arrested and brutally interrogated almost 1,200 Christians during a murder investigation. "We would ask that you hold accountable the officials responsible for the mistreatment of over 1,000 local Christians in connection with the murder of Samir Awaieda Hakim and Karam Tamir Arsel in August of 1998," wrote Janet Epp Buckingham, RLC director in a letter to Mubarak. "We are concerned that the lack of accountability in the earlier case may have encouraged extremist Muslim elements to commit violence against Christians without fear of penalty."

Maranatha Homes Burlington, Ont.

This award-winning Senior Citizen Home is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation. Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income.

Information from:
Rosanne van der Woerd, 3260 New Street,
Burlington, ON L7N 3L4, Phone: (905) 681-0311

Dreams/Psychology

Night Swimmer

The houses coiled
within themselves like sleeping
cats against the strangeness
of the night (scumbler
of boundaries; infinite anarchist),
I waken to the slam
of car doors.... footsteps
in the empty streets below
a voice.... urgently calling
my name: (strange name)
awake sleeper awake
for while you sleep
the world is bleeding away
molecule by molecule
dispersing like a mist.

Kicking off from my window
sill like a swimmer of black
space, I tread urgently upon
the darkness struggling lunging
to surface thrusting hard
against the downward pull
the weight that draws
me down toward the voice
that calls my name
echoing through the silent streets
my feet reluctant
to meet the upward thrust
the tearing teeth of gravel
roads into my leaping
dreaming soles.

The black liquid surface
above is both limit and life.
My dreams erupt from me
in silver bubbles that burst
like stars against the dark
underbelly of God
floating overhead
like a huge, sleeping whale.
A thousand pores in the black
beauty of his skin absorb
my dreams and he dreams
with me and I with him.

At last my own supply
of air gives out. My mouth
gapes wide and I am filled
with lightness, and, breaking
through the dark integumen
of sleeping birth, I'm swimming
in God, hearing the soft
rumble of her tenderness.

Harry der Nederlanden

Letter from Europe

Tilting at windmills in a waking dream

Jay Reay

Dreams are common in literature. From the vison of the Holy Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, an Anglo-Saxon poem of AD 750, to John Berryman's *Dream Songs*, a meditation on American literature, dreams and dreaming have been an important source of material for writers.

In Miguel de Cervantes' epic comedy *Don Quixote* we see the central character, the emaciated and ancient "man of La Mancha," pursue a dream. In fact, he spends the last few years of a long and previously uneventful life as a country gentleman living in a dreamlike world. While many of us enjoy the bizarre events in the tale and the humor in the telling, the world of 16th century Spain is distant. But Quixote's story does have some relevance for us.

Quixote's dream is to become the perfect knight, who fights evil and helps the innocent. He fits himself out in his ancestors' rusty armor lying around his mansion and, mounted on his scrawny old nag, Rosinante, and accompanied by his simple (but canny) servant,

Dreaming is close to insanity, as close as "normal people" get. Dreams are irrational.

Sancho Panza, he travels the sun-scorched plains of central Spain in search of adventures worthy of his chivalrous nature.

And he finds them. *Don Quixote* is a long and richly written tale, one of the first novels. As we travel with the old man we enter his dream-world where windmills become giants marching across the empty plains around Toledo; where a humble inn seems to be a castle; where the knight is threatened with death; where an enchanted head speaks to him; and on through many other funny and touching adventures.

Dreams and nightmares

All the stuff of dreams and nightmares. But of course, the knight and his squire are not dreaming. They are awake, and the strange, frightening adventures are real. It is only what the old knight thinks he sees and hears around him, how he interprets the life he inhabits, that appear dreamlike to us.

Do we often find ourselves in such an unnatural, dreamlike state

What is your model for parenting?

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Bill and Joan are feeling lost and confused. Their teenage children no longer listen to them. They want to live their our own lives. "Butt out!" is their favorite expression. "Leave us alone!" is their second. With tears in their eyes the parents recall the horror of their own adolescence. The substance abuse, the promiscuity. They want to protect their children from poor choices. They know about the emptiness of life on the street And so they try to orchestrate their children's lives in such a way the children cannot grow towards healthy interdependence.

Models of parenting

The way we parent has often more to do with ourselves than with our children. Some of us parent autocratically. In other words, we are the "boss." We have rigid rules for our children. Mistakes are met with ridicule or painful punishments. We demand respect from our children but do not respect them in return. We try to control our children's behavior through threats, sarcasm, or bribes. We reward or praise them for dutiful obedience. We tell them "what" to think. And love is mostly conditional – especially good behavior. The relationship between parent and child is one of "limits without freedom."

On the other side of the continuum is the permissive parent. Here we give in to our children. There are no rules, limits or order. We shield our children from the consequences of their behavior. We lecture or use bribes for obedient behavior. In this model children do not respect their parents nor learn to work or contribute to the family. And in this case, too, love is highly conditional. The relationship between parent and child is one of "freedom without limits."

Both models contribute to children having an unclear concept of who they are. In the autocratic model, children can either become compliant and needing to please or resentful, rebellious and angry. In the permissive model, children can become unreliable, uncooperative, dissatisfied and unhappy, selfish and inconsiderate.

Parents mirror empowering model

William Glasser, a well-known psychotherapist, once said : "Children will find in the eyes of the parents who raise them, mirrors in which they discover themselves." If this is so, how do we want to relate to our children? How would they acquire a healthy concept of themselves?

As Christians, we believe an empowering message. Consequently, subscribing to an empowering parenting model would be in harmony with the gospel. Here parents are leaders. Rules are firm but fair. Behavior entails natural and logical consequences. There is mutual respect between parents and children. Learning happens through experience and mistakes are opportunities for growth. Children's ideas, efforts and work are valued. They are taught "how" to think. Love in this model is unconditional. The relationship between parent and child is one of "freedom within limits."

It sounds easy. But it is not. To relate to our children in an empowering way is a lot of work. It cannot be done quickly between 6 and 8 in the evening. Nor can it be done only on the weekends. It takes commitment and persistence day after day. But this is the model that allows both parents and children to grow together in an environment that leaves room for the empowering work of the Holy Spirit as well as the comforting strength of God's redemptive love.

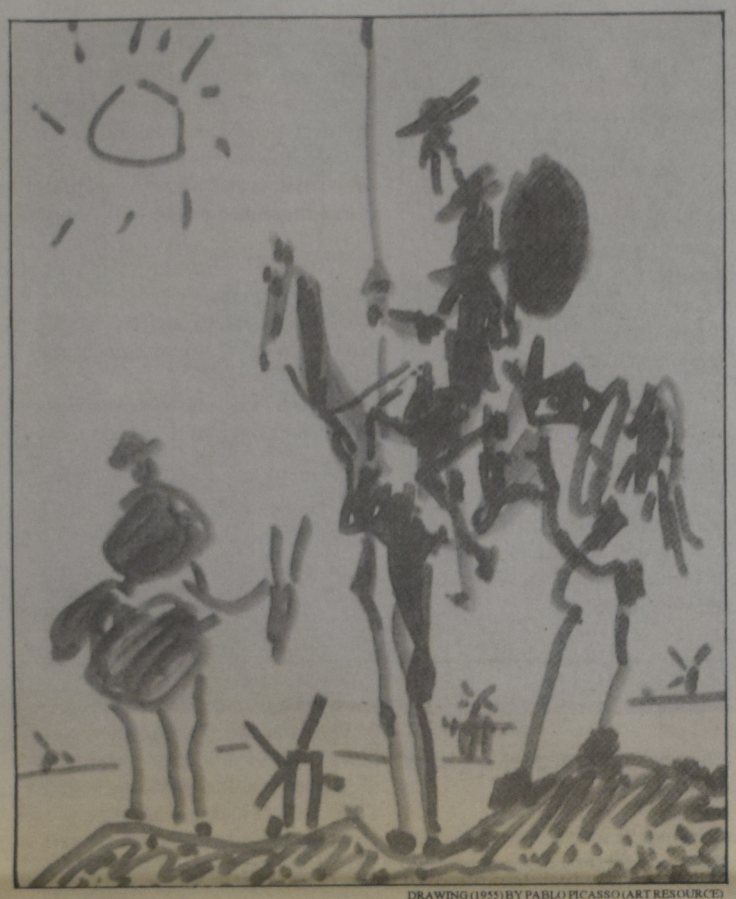
Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

in our own lives? Few of us would admit that the wide-awake world we live in ever gets more than just slightly odd. We may complain that rising crime rates and freely available pornography masquerading as entertainment are signs of a sin-sick world gone mad, but we surely don't think they are as bizarre as the fantastical, topsy-turvy world we read of in *Don Quixote*.

Young men today who are hopped up on too much escapist television and violent "shoot- em-up" computer games, react to ordinary, hum-drum, real life around them in a bizarre fashion.

Yet psychologists specializing in the study of dreaming tell us that there are many cases in which events around us, in the real world of wakefulness, are close to dreams. Dr. Ernest Hartmann of Tufts University says: "Under certain conditions, waking activity is as visual and 'dreamlike' and bizarre as dreaming" (*Theory on the Nature and Function of Dreaming*, 1999).

Dreaming is close to insanity, as close as "normal people" get. Dreams are irrational. In dreams we dodge bullets or defy gravity or meet long-dead heroes. In dreams we become what we've always wanted to be but never could be, or become what we've always dreaded we might be.



DRAWING (1955) BY PABLO PICASSO (ART RESOURCE)

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, as portrayed by Pablo Picasso.

Extraordinary view

The old Spanish knight Don Quixote travels through a very real world on his chivalrous quest, wide awake. But he sees ordinary things in extraordinary ways, and reacts accordingly. His peculiar type of insanity, brought on by boredom and too much reading of medieval romances and tales of knightly derring-do, is perhaps not as unusual as we might think.

For example, young men today who are bored by a life too demanding for their mental capacity and hopped up on too much escapist television and violent "shoot-em-up" computer games, react to ordinary, hum-drum, real life around them in a bizarre fashion. They put on the modern warrior's armor of combat fatigues and steal their parents' weapons to take on a world they see has turned its back on them.

Not tilting at windmills or slashing at ghostly wineskins, but blowing away children of their own age with carbines and automatic shotguns.

This touches all of us. We may not have children at school, the new front line in this waking nightmare, but we are a part of communities at risk. The children affected by this phenomenon come from "good families" in pleasant neighborhoods. Their aggressors and potential killers may be victims too, normal kids living amongst us but deprived or over-indulged in dysfunctional homes.

An alternative

What prompts all this nightmarish violence? Literature has been full of gratuitous fighting and killing for centuries, much of it written for young readers. Since I was a boy I've enjoyed *Treasure Island* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the magical *Odyssey* of Homer, Shakespeare's bloody historical plays, and of course, *Don Quixote* with its hero's violent reaction to normal, everyday events. Many of us were brought up on such stories and we live a normal life, not a waking nightmare.

Is it the effects of television and computer games? We see a growing fascination there with aggressive self-expression and particularly with the occult, much of it to do with unpopular kids in a "normal" community caught up in a pernicious web of devil-worship and violence.

The waking dream-quest of Don Quixote is a gentle tale, funny and touching, instructive and entertaining. Apart from the Don himself, tortured by his unrequited, secret love for the fair maiden Dulcinea, and terrified by the imaginings of his demented mind, no one gets hurt.

The Christian faith has prompted many books and poems based on dreaming. The quest for the Grail, one of the most famous, is a fantastic adventure, similar to Cervantes' tale, in its magical departure from the real world But it's based on reality, the power of God.

Good writing allows us to see other worlds, and to be where we cannot be, to go beyond ourselves, not in a dream, but in our waking imagination. In a world going mad, let us hold on to the central truth of God's control over his world, and the part we play in his Kingdom here on earth. Perhaps then we can bring our aggressive youth out of their waking nightmare.

Jay Reay is an Anglican and a knowledge management consultant who tilts at windmills near Oxford, England.

Strength in serendipity?

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

I just finished reading a book by Gordon MacDonald entitled *Ordering Your Private Wor/d.* My kids laughed when they saw the title, wondering why a person like me who arranges the CDs alphabetically would need such a book. But in fact the book deals more with matters of building personal strength through inner order than it does with housekeeping habits.

There are lots of good strategies in MacDonald's book. Among other things, he advocates a lifestyle of careful planning, prudent spending, and serious commitment to prayer and devotional time. Organizing one's physical world is part of the routine MacDonald sees as crucial to maintaining a clear head. I agree with much of what he writes, but ironically it is my very effort to establish order that gets in the way of achieving it.

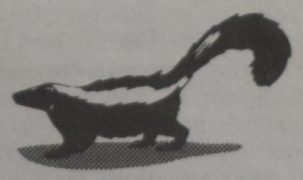
'Good enough never is'

Part of my need for propriety stems from my upbringing. My father was a man of tremendous self-discipline. He began each day at 5:30 a.m., (6:30 on his days off), followed by exercises before breakfast. The razor-sharp creases in his trousers were punctuated by meticulously polished shoes. He never left a light burning in an empty room, washed his hands before every meal, and not only put the toilet seat down, but insisted that the lid be closed as well. My dad's personal motto was, "Good enough never is." No wonder I'm compulsive.

For many years I would begin each day intending to move mountains, only to be found still stumbling over mole hills by evening. To this day, I have little time or patience for anything I haven't actually planned.

Reflecting on MacDonald's book, I finally concluded that my personal struggle isn't so much about order as it is about flexibility. My tendency is to expend so much effort in pursuit of order that I am unable to cope with the unexpected things in life. I like to think that over the years God has been patiently teaching me not only to manage life's little surprises, but to appreciate them.

Close encounters of a skunk kind



These days, when things start piling up on me, I like to take a brisk walk to clear my thoughts. The other day I was on such a stroll, accompanied by my ten-year-old collie, Dusty. I was so absorbed in the worries of the day that I failed to notice an apparently dead skunk on the side of the road until I was only about two feet away from it. Startled by the sight, I looked back to see where my dog was. When my gaze returned to the skunk it was sitting up, blinking curiously back at me!

I immediately bolted into the adjacent wheat field, running as fast as any middle-aged woman in winter boots can run through a thick layer of mud. When I thought I was at a safe distance, I stopped to look back. There was Dusty, nose to nose with the skunk, wagging his tail like the imbecile he is. I was far more concerned with the skunk's tail than Dusty's. Twice in his life, Dusty has been exiled to the garage for a few weeks, after getting too close to small, black and white creatures. I called the dog with what I hoped was an air of authority in my voice. He may not be brilliant but at least he's obedient. He came cheerfully galloping over to me, oblivious to the potentially odoriferous encounter he'd escaped.

The sleepy skunk ambled off into the bushes while Dusty and I hastily retreated to the farm. By the time we reached home I was laughing out loud for the first time that day. It's amazing how life's little surprises can give you a whole new perspective.

Heidi VanDerSlikke dodges skunks in Harriston, Ont.

Dreams

Dreams: "the most accurate X-ray machines of the soul"

Ministry to self-imprisoned persons inspired by a dream

Alan Doerksen

Many Christians ignore dreams, dismissing them as unimportant fantasies that disappear at the break of dawn. But for Casey Vander Stelt, dreams have proven to be a continuing source of inspiration for his life and ministry. In the following interview, Vander Stelt explains how one dream inspired him to start his ministry, Self-Discovery of Imprisoned Persons (SIP), and how dreams can make a positive difference in our lives.

Christian Courier: You started SIP as the result of a dream. Please tell me about the dream.

Vander Stelt: In 1983 came a special one-sentence dream: I had to get up, go to southern Ontario, buy a tractor, cross the border and sell it to a farmer in Ohio. I thought that was so much garbage, so I did't bother writing it down. But in three days, I did write it down. Then I shared it with my psychotherapist.

He said, "What's the first thing you have to do in the dream?" Get up, go to southern Ontario. In other words, don't stay where you are.

[The tractor represented] power, hard work, slugging.

CC FILES

"You can imagine that you were to be the tractor, ready for hard work and introducing people's heads to their hearts."

CC: What about crossing the border?

VS: The therapist stopped and asked me, "Didn't you tell me a few years ago you did some prison work in the early 1950s?" Then a little light inside me went on.

[A farmer is] someone who breaks up the ground. Air can't get in, water can't get in, seed can't get in. If sticks and stones and junk come up, a good farmer doesn't curse at them and blame them, but picks them up and removes them, gets the soil ready, sows the seed.

But then, water is needed to soften the hard shell of the seed, so the softness of the bean can sprout forth. Next, food is needed, nitrogen, humus. Next, sunshine.

Then the therapist said, "If you can imagine that you were to be the tractor, ready for hard work and introducing people's heads to their hearts ... you listen to see what gifts and talents they have, no matter what shape they might be in. Challenge them to develop them. When junk comes up, like on a farm — when resentment, hatred, anxiety, anger [come up] — instead of criticizing, help them to overcome it."

Next, sowing the seed, which I never had to do. They [the inmates Vander Stelt ministers to] all know there is a God. But it's more his healing, forgiving love I myself have experienced that I share with them. Then, the water of life sometimes is needed. A person almost has to bottom out first before he or she is ready to begin to open up.

Next, food is needed for the physical dimension, the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual dimension – all in balance, not overstressing one at the cost of the other. Then, as sunshine is needed to warm the earth, what people need is God's unconditional acceptance as they are. Surround them on an ongoing basis with Christ-like compassion and love.

CC: Have you had other dreams which you have acted on?

VS: I have 1,900 written down [from over 20 years]. I went through about 1,800 of them with my psychotherapist. [These dreams] have helped to bring about more inner harmony in my own personal life, a life of almost horrific brokenness as part of a very dysfunctional family.

I was rejected 10 months after birth. I was the wrong kind. My mother wanted a girl. When she was told I was a boy, I was rejected out of hand. No love, no acceptance, no appreciation – never a hug, never a kiss. My father was a bright man, nice man in many ways, but quite a perfectionist.

First came rejection, and when I tried to prove myself, criticism. That has contributed to a tremendously strong inferiority complex in my life.

To compensate, I became somewhat of a workaholic, somewhat of a possession-aholic, [with] an overemphasis on the intellect, on theological knowhow – to compensate for the emotional starvation. It was only made worse.

[Through dreams,] there's no end to how one can get to understand oneself better, on a deeper level [and] find out the most hidden elements in one's life: not only gifts, but so-called skeletons-in-the-closet that one has unwittingly suppressed.

CC: Has God spoken to you through your dreams?

VS: I would say all of them, but I must qualify that. The Lord does not speak through dreams alone, nor does he speak through Scripture alone. In my experience, he speaks through his Word, his Spirit, prayer, dreams. And in communicating with other people on a one-to-one basis, at a most intimate level. All of these combined help me not only to stay alive but to have energy to work with the most troubled people: not to fix people, not to change them, but to listen, be with them, help them to discover for themselves what's eating them from within.

CC: Do Christians take dreams seriously enough?

VS: Most Christians I have met would rather almost not talk about them, other than in a very glib way: "I like the good dreams, but I don't like the bad ones."

I always tell them, "They are both aspects of our lives – both positive and negative." We can learn and discover much from the so-called bad dreams, to help us discover there is something in our lives that is not up to par.

I call dreams "the most accurate X-ray machines of the soul."

CC: How can we know when to act on our dreams?

VS: Take note and try to discover, "What is this dream trying to say?"

In our conscious lives, we sometimes tend to go off the road. A dream will come to try to point that out – to counterbalance, to tip us off, or to warn us, "Look, this is not the best way to go."

Most dreams [are in] symbolic language, so in order to begin to understand them, you need some help to clue in to what different symbols might mean. Not too many dreams use direct language.

[For instance,] tomorrow, you plan to go to a certain place, and then a dream [says], "Don't go." That doesn't happen too often.

Most dreams have a veil. They're much like the parables. [Jesus told parables] to give power to the people to discover for themselves, rather than him telling them what the parable meant. Dreams, by and large, use masks....

If it's important enough, and that element in my life needs attention, the dream will come back maybe three times over. The first time, you didn't get the meaning of it, but on the third or fourth time, it's clear."

Many inmates have been helped by sharing their dreams with me. No one can tell somebody else what dreams mean. All another person can do is ask questions, and probe for possibilities. We can't interpret dreams for them.

[Vander Stelt says his psychotherapist helps him "to discover the hidden meaning, which sometimes is less obvious."]

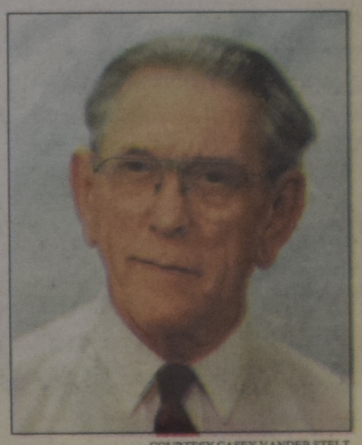
CC: Have you found any books about dreams to be useful?

VS: They're hardly worth the paper they're written on. There are general truths like, for example, animals resemble our feelings. [But] every dream is different. There's no two dreams alike. The same thing can appear in one dream but have a different meaning in another dream. [Dreams are] very specific; individually taylored.

CC: Can Christians discern God's will through dreams?

VS: I would never say, "dreams only," nor "prayer only," nor "Scripture-reading only," nor "other people only." It is all in combination....

A note of caution: one should never pressure other people, especially very troubled people, to work on their dreams alone, because what the unconscious might bring up may at times be too much for the person to face, especially alone. It could have drastic consequences, such as suicide.



COURTESY CASEY VANDER STELT

Casey Vander Stelt

CC: Have you had any other dreams which you have acted on?

VS: I was in Holland in a dream. Our barn was built length-ways into a dike. Rumor had it there were 20 young people going to come to see our farm and our farmyard. I remember that the farmyard was covered with about two inches of the most awful, bad, stinky, messy stuff that you could ever imagine – which represented all of the dark side that I didn't want them to walk on or see. So I shovelled and I worked and finally got it all in one pile: the worst of my life. To my total surprise, there was a Christian college prof sitting beside my pile, smiling. End of dream.

So, I shared it with my therapist. He said, "Do you know this man?"

I said, "Very well."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"He's sincere. He's a beautiful person."

"And he was smiling, beside the worst of your sins. You can imagine that man represents Christ, sitting beside the worst of your life and smiling. Furthermore, do you know that you can grow some of the most rich, nourishing , red tomatoes on top of a compost pile? You even have some left over for people who are hungry, even in prison, would that make sense?"

So, the worst can be transformed into something good.

Dreams

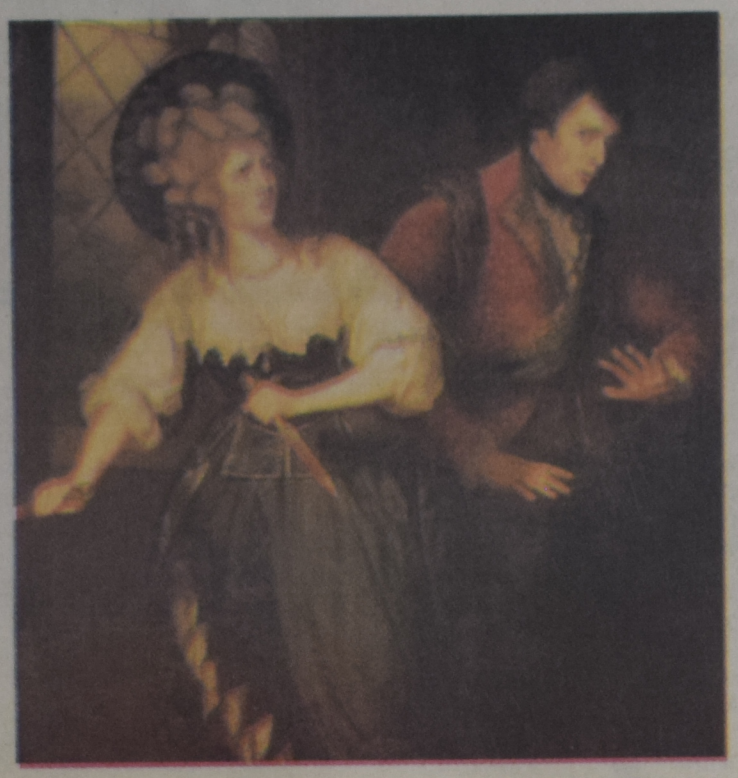
Dreaming: prophecy shivers my whirling brain

Ray Louter

Recently I had a dream. In it, I was being pursued by someone who, I knew, meant me harm. I came to a dead end and I was trapped. In the strange logic of my dream, I knew that it was possible to exhale my way through solid objects. This I was attempting when I awoke, still puffing air. I was relieved to find that it was only a dream. However, I have not been able to shake the feeling that the dream was real, in some way.

It was real; but real what?

Artists have always been interested in dreams because they understand that in dreams we find the kernel of an imaginative act — a fiction of some kind — which can then be ordered to tell a story that will make sense to other people. Sometimes dreams inspire us with unusual imagery, color, sound and the sensation of movement through space. What if, alongside these other notions, we considered dreams as messages to us here and now?



MRS. SIDDONS AND J.P. KEMBLE IN THE DAGGER SCENE FROM MACBETH (1806), AN OIL PAINTING BY THOMAS BEACH

Lady Macbeth (left),as portrayed by Sarah Siddon, a leading Shakespearean actress if the early 1800s.

Dreams in the Bible

We don't have to look long for significant stories about message-dreams in scripture. The dreams of Joseph foretold the future, and his capacity to interpret dreams got him out of jail and into the court of Pharaoh. Daniel both knew and interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. He was similarly rewarded.

In Acts 2:17 Peter quotes the prophet Joel who prophesied about the future where young men would see visions and old men dream dreams at the time of the outpouring of the Spirit. We are also warned in Deuteronomy 13:3 about prophets and dreamers who mislead the people by attributing the source of dreams and prophecy to other gods.

In Jeremiah 29:8 the Lord is clearly concerned that the people are putting stock in dreams being interpreted by false prophets for purposes of deception. Clearly, Scripture means for us to interpret the meaning of dreams and to interpret them correctly.

In 5th and 4th century BC Greek drama, dreams were often linked to the activity of the gods in human affairs. Dreamers were the prophets and seers. They were both highly valued and feared because of the belief that they had an intimate relationship with the gods (not always a benefit). In the play Agamemnon by Aeschylus, Kassandra (cursed by Apollo to always tell the truth but never to be believed) foretells both her own demise and that of Agamemnon. Before the palace gate she cries out at what she alone can see and others only suspect, that within the palace she will meet her doom:

But this is evil, see!
Now once again the pain of grim true prophecy shivers my whirling brain in a storm of things foreseen.
(Lattimore,42)

She understands that the ancient curse which hangs over the house of Agamemnon has also come to claim her. In many other plays of the period dreams and oracles are one of the ways in which the gods make their will known to people.

Dreams in drama

Dreams in Elizabethan plays often signal guilt, or some kind of profound moral cancer in the dreamer. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, and in this semi-dream state tries to wipe poor Duncan's blood off her hands. The guilt for her participation in his murder manifests itself in her dreams. The significance of this disturbing tendency in her is not lost on the doctor standing nearby:

Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all!
(V 1 line 71-75)

In this we sense Shakespeare's belief that the cause of disturbed dreams maybe spiritual rather than psychological, though in Shakespeare's day they didn't etch such a hard line between mental and spiritual disciplines. In this interpretation we sense his attempt to point out a problem as having to do with sin. In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo's friend, the passionate Mercutio talks of Queen Mab, a fairy who flits through the dreams of men leaving behind the residue of violence. He speaks madly, without restraint:

Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldiers neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again.

Romeo finally quiets his friend with:

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
Thou talkest of nothing.

To which a subdued and now more rational Mercutio replies:

True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air
And more inconstant than the wind... (I 1 line 82-88, 96-101)

In this play, however, this talk of dreams is more significant because it acts to foreshadow what is to come in the play — the senseless slaughter of members of two warring families, including the young lovers. The dream in this case, the fantastic tirade about Queen Mab, is really a metaphysical finger pointing to the hearts of the players in this tragedy. They are prone to violence whether a fairy may be blamed or not. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we watch lovers and clowns cavorting in the forest among all of the magical immortals that live there. Love is made possible by the magic of the dream.

In *The Tempest* Prospero ends the fantastic action of the play by awakening the characters as though from a sleep. Clearly, dreams have been seen by playwrights as messages from a spiritual world and as a way of foreshadowing action to come, but also as metaphors for life itself.

Dreams in film

More recently playwrights and film-makers have attempted to represent their art as dream. Not content with representing dreams and dreamers they have proposed ways for us as audience to see and hear a play as though we are inside the experience.

At the beginning of the 20th century (by which time Sigmund Freud's work on the nature of dreams had become disseminated) a number of playwrights began to create works which drew their shape from the logic of dreams. They distorted all of the usual conventions of theatre (rational dialogue, historically accurate settings, logical plot progression etc.) to create Surrealist theatre.

In August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (1901), he explores the nature of creation through the eyes of a woman, the daughter of a god named Indra.

In the play, the gods observe humanity but it is the special task of the daughter to live it. The play breaks acting tradition by having actors play a number of different parts. "The characters split, double and multiply; they evaporate, crystalize, scatter and converge," says Strindberg, but the unifying force in the play remains the dreamer. The play ends with a castle rising up out of manure; it bursts, finally, into a chrysanthemum — a symbol of faith amid despair.

I find it fascinating how dreams penetrate our experience of reality to suggest new ways of thinking and seeing the world around us. I also find it both humbling and inspiring to consider that God may whisper to us in that open and receptive dream-state that we enter each night.

Still, dreams are sometimes frightening and disorderly: images crowd through the mind and shake our calm. I'm okay with that because I don't think that God is orderly the way we sometimes like to think. God is a loving, personal God but He is not a rational being who may be put in a logical box. He is also powerful and, frankly, sometimes frightening. Dreams remind me of that.

Now if I can only figure out what that exhalation thing is supposed to mean...

Ray Louter teaches drama at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont.

AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE THEATRE, STRATFORD, CONN (MARTHA SWOPE)

A scene from Shakespeare's comedy, The Tempest.

Comment

A love-hate relationship with a Reformed upbringing

Two Under 35

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Elizabeth,

Over the last few years I've become more and more disenchanted with "fighting the good fight." Trying to bring change to a community — especially a Christian community — seemed about as worthwhile as blowing in the wind.

Two months out of Sioux Center, I realized that much of our Reformed community (including the leadership) is not all that Reformed. This became obvious to me from the preaching I heard, the way people talked, and the condescending remarks people made to me ("Well Dirk, I really don't believe they teach that kind of stuff at Dordt College.").

Finally, I realized people are people; at a certain age one just doesn't listen to anything new. Without even knowing what I was doing (because I couldn't fully understand my inchoate sentiments), I left the community and walked down a path marked by cynicism and bitterness. Over the past two years, I've started to come around. And two events of the past two months have helped me re-adjust my attitude towards the importance of participating in a Christian community. But before explaining what happened, I wonder if you have anything to say.

Dirk

✉ ✉ ✉

Dirk,

My sister once said to me, "You can leave the Christian Reformed Church, but it never leaves you." (She's been a confirmed member of the Anglican Church for some 10 years now.) I smiled at her, and took that sentiment to heart.

I think you know, Dirk, how I feel about my Reformed upbringing. It's been a love-hate relationship. I recently read one lapsed Reformed writer describe his image of the CRC as a noose around his neck, but if he ever took the noose off, he'd die, for it was the noose that was saving him. Powerful imagery, that, but sad too. It's not our Reformed faith that saves us, it's Christ, and I've come across a lot of people in our tradition who seem to have forgotten that.

But what struck me about what you just wrote is that you want to change a community. You can't expect to change others, Dirk. You can only change yourself. I'm speaking from my own experience, and I'm only beginning to realize this myself. Expecting others to change will only bring about bitterness, because it's all about what you want, not what is good or right for the other person, or for the community.

Elizabeth

✉ ✉ ✉

Elizabeth,

I'm going to have to disagree, Elizabeth. There are times when communities need change and there are people who can bring it about. I think it's a matter of how it's done.

Here's one of those "events" to illustrate my point. This week, our university is being visited by the aesthetics philosopher, Calvin Seerveld. In as rigid a place as Korea, Cal can talk about imagination, creativity — even sex — and people are amazed. Korean Christians just don't hear this stuff very often. Well, I think Cal's success has to do with *how* he presents himself and his ideas. He wears colourful shirts instead of suits. He presents his ideas as opinions. He asks for input. He talks to people, not at them. He offers his lecture as "sweet smelling sacrifices to God."

Perhaps Cal doesn't change people as much as he gets them to realize things they inherently know are true. I think you could say Cal is fighting a good fight — and changing people — even though it's in showing love rather than by raising a sword. It's his method, his approach, which I find effective.

Things weren't always so easy for Dr. Seerveld. Thirty years ago he and his philosophy buddies got themselves into hot water when they traveled around North America, lecturing on the Christian world-and-life view to the Reformed community. Some of what they said was considered radical and in certain places they weren't welcome. But they stuck it out and helped bring the neo-Calvinist perspective where it was needed.

As for Reformed communities, I don't ever want to downplay the trouble some people have with it (just look at us). Still, I'm convinced Reformed Christianity is advanced citizenship in the Kingdom of God. The problem is that you gotta want it bad or not at all, because it's not easy and it's gonna put up a fight.

Dirk

Dirk,

Hmmmm. Well, there could be a lot of reasons for the different reactions. Korean Christians today aren't Reformed North Americans of thirty years ago, and Cal, I'm sure, isn't the same man he was then either. So it's hard to say why one audience is more receptive than another. But it's this arrogance about the Reformed tradition that bothers me, which is what I said in my previous message: it's Christ who saves us, not our Reformed faith. Why are you so sure the Reformed world-and-life view is so "advanced" the rest of the world needs it? I think it's *that* attitude that has gotten our community into the hot water you talk about, because arrogance of that magnitude always blinds one to other ways of thinking and seeing.

Elizabeth

✉ ✉ ✉

Elizabeth,

Once again I am forced to disagree with you. I think you may be confusing arrogance of the Reformed tradition with a strong confidence in it. I believe that one of the distinguishing marks of the Reformed tradition is its ability to evaluate other ways of seeing and thinking. No one from the Reformed tradition would dispute the fact that we are saved by Christ alone, as this is one of the main tenets of the Reformed faith.

But the beauty of the Reformed tradition is that it offers much more than the simple "Jesus and me" spirituality that has flooded our churches in recent years. It provides a worldview that penetrates every area of our lives from family to art to business to recreation to church. It provides a deep historical foundation that allows us to stand up against cults that also claim: "It's Christ who saves." And it provides an assurance that amidst our struggles we can know that God is in control and that God is good.

The point of all this is that I believe that the Reformed tradition that has been taught by people like John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper (and Calvin Seerveld) offers the best interpretation of Scripture.

Well, I didn't intend the column to go this way but I'm kind of glad it did. After your comments I felt a defense of the Reformed faith was necessary. And as for the rest of the world needing the Reformed faith I must say that no belief is worth its salt if it's not held with universal intent. When I say this I mean that I believe that the tenets of the Reformed faith are true and that they are true for everyone. Unfortunately, this does sound arrogant in the ears of anyone who doesn't believe that there are any absolute truths.

Dirk

✉ ✉ ✉

Dirk,

You've made a worthy defense and I thank you for that. I needed to hear it. And you are right: if I didn't feel there was something worthwhile about the Reformed tradition, I wouldn't be struggling with any of this.

But, in closing, I also need to say this: I've seen too many people in the various Reformed communities of which I've been a part stay with the Reformed faith because of arrogance, not confidence, and I think it's dangerous. The Dutch Reformed tradition, in particular, has this legacy where we all "agree to disagree" and part ways, starting a new denomination over each difference because we're so sure we're right. When confidence leads to a breakdown in the relationship, it's arrogance, in my dictionary.

Elizabeth

✉ ✉ ✉

Elizabeth,

You're right. There is a thin line between confidence and arrogance. That danger is always present. Anyway, Dr. Seerveld is wrapping up his lectures tomorrow. He'll fly back to Ontario on the weekend. If you want to meet this guy, Elizabeth, I'll call his travel agent and set up a lay-over in Vancouver. You can have coffee with Cal.

Talk to you next month,

Dirk

Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver. Dirk Schouten teaches literature and writing at Kosin University in South Korea.

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

ONE POLITICAL RACE is bad enough: Gore versus Bush. Of course, we all knew this was going to happen, even though my sympathies, as usual were with the underdogs, with McCain and with Gore's opponent, Bradley. But, as usual in politics, the party establishment won. Now the two prep-school princes will pound on each other, and apart from personal slander — apparently necessary in US politics — we already know what these two men from the American elite will say: Bush wants to axe taxes and to waste money on re-arming with hi-tech weapons and so arouse the already warlike tendencies in Russia.

And Gore? He will duly and dully be more liberal: pro-choice in abortion, pro-gun control, pro-healthcare for the poor and universal healthcare for children. He also wants to change campaign finance. So, some real issues to debate, in which he is much better than Bush.

AND THEN THERE IS the other race, fortunately much shorter, in which two Albertans are trying to conquer Ontario for their new party. Here are some headlines you will see: Will Manning carry the Day? Will Manning have a hay-Day? Will Day's stock go well? Will Manning beat the day-light out of Stock? These headlines are better than "Is Gore bushed?" Or "Will Gore gore Bush?"

In both countries the message of the United Alternative and the Republicans will not differ that much, and neither will they do well in either country: they are too divided, as Christians usually are. Actually everywhere the Right has gone wrong politically: the Christian Democrats in Germany in disarray, the Tories in Great Britain torn apart by scandals as well. In Canada the divided Right — Manning's Reform, Day's Alternative and Clark's Conservatives — will give Chretien his desired, but not deserved, third majority. At least the TV and Newspapers will have something to talk and write about.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT. We had three teenage grandchildren over during the March break, while their parents took off for a few days. They — God bless them — have no TV at home, and so we were exposed to a bit more TV watching, not much, actually, but it confirmed to me again that by and large TV is a waste of time.

Remember the so-called marriage of the millionaire? A sure flop. Well, the main channels are trying hard to keep their audience from dwindling, so the prime-time parade of human sacrifice on the altar of Mammon will resume. CBS will fly 16 strangers — and a plane load of TV cameras — to a deserted island off the coast of Borneo, in Indonesia, to film its summer series Survivor. The 'contestants,' ranging in age from 22 to 72, must pull together to find food, build shelter, and survive in the wild for up to 40 days. Every week one person will be sent packing and whoever lasts longest will get $1million.

Then there is Big Brother, a show in which 10 strangers will spend 100 days confined to a house, cut off completely from the outside world. Though these groups are forbidden to watch TV, they will constantly be exposed to the whole world on the tube. This endurance test will also have its monetary reward: the last person remaining will get a big cash prize.

I wonder whether this is survival of the fittest or the meanest. Shows like these have done well in Europe, spawning fan clubs and creating instant celebrities out of unknowns. Some critics say that it's like the Romans watching the Christians being fed to the lions. Well, you be the judge, if you watch TV. I won't.

DO BELIEVING PEOPLE live longer and better? I think so, because their outlook on life is different. A redeemed person need not fear death and as such is more relaxed about sickness and death and so has a more healthy outlook on life because the promise to inherit the earth is in itself invigorating and something to look forward to. At least that's how I feel. I write this because a recent report has good news for the optimists, and I count myself among that group.

A 30-year study shows that people with a positive perspective live 19 per cent longer than pessimists. It is possible that an optimistic attitude somehow strengthens the immune system or perhaps optimists people take better care of themselves. Nineteen per cent is quite a bit: where the pessimists has an average of say 70 years, the people with a positive outlook live to 83 years.

Also, being a Christian should have another advantage, for true believers see their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, and regard this life as a proving ground for eternity where our bodies will last for ever. So we already try to live eternally, with the emphasis on 'try' because we usually fall short.

THE WEATHER. We have had the warmest winter on record. The American and Canadian West is fighting drought while elsewhere rain is too abundant. Storms, typhoons, hurricanes, heat waves. Blame the oil companies. Robin McKie in the London Observer writes: "Many experts predict that the family of someone killed in a storm or avalanche may soon follow the example of litigants against cigarette companies and sue oil companies for pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere."

RELIGION. TO LEARN how to live Christianly is a life-long struggle. Some students in the US experienced this recently. In the South of the US, Nashville Tennessee where Al Gore hails from, is Lipscomb University associated with the Churches of Christ. Its 2,600 students are required to attend daily Bible chapel services and Bible studies. When a top student athlete suddenly fell ill, the entire student body prayed for her.

Said a New York Times article, quoting one student: "All over campus, before we go to sleep, when we wake up, she's in our thoughts." Prayer groups were organized so that at least one person was praying around the clock for Kaya, the name of the student who had contracted meningococcal meningitis. It was a powerful expression of faith and the students expected results, because they felt that Scriptures were clear on this: "Ask, and it will be given. All things are possible to him who believes."

But things did not go well. The surgeons had to amputate both legs below the knee to save her life. Questions flowed: Why did Kaya — only 18 and the captain of the team — lose her legs when so many were praying for her to be healed? Does prayer work? How does God respond? The prayer vigil is still on. But the nature of the petitions have changed, as has the outlook of many students. Said one student: "I've moved from just assuming whatever I think is God's will... to 'Thy will be done'."

WE TOO HAVE MUCH to pray about. Our prayer group is never short of people to pray for. It seems that cancer strikes more and more at a younger age. And then there is Africa and Madagascar and Mozambique where many Christians live and where suffering seems a daily routine. Our prayers also should go to Russia and China.

The last issue I concluded with a remark on developments there. There are now more definite signs that in both countries traditional leaders are gaining the upper hand against pro-Western economic reformers. In China a high-ranking, pro-reform official has been executed for alleged corruption. And an old face — Li Peng — has returned to power. This was the man co-responsible for the Tiananmen massacre.

Whether China embraces more Western ways or reverts to a centrally controlled economy will have a major impact on the world. Western Capitalism will result in more chaos and corruption, while going back to the past will kill Western investments and also fuel major internal discontent. In either case instability will be the result.

And Russia? This week they have elections and Vladimir Putin will become the official president. Putin has a problem, a pillaging problem. Putin was backed by the plundering petroleum plutocrates, the ultra-rich Russian Mafia who managed to take control of the large oil and natural gas reserves in the country when industry was privatized. With the high oil prices, they are becoming more powerful by the day. Unless he is able to fight the criminal element in Russia, he will fail, and Russia will become even more chaotic.

Russia needs the West to obtain loans, and for a few months, Putin will portray a positive picture to the West. But the IMF, with a new leader, will not lend to bankrupt Russia; it would be akin to giving booze to an alcoholic and the money will be drained away into the coffers of the criminals. Putin knows this and expects the West to refuse his approach. This refusal will give him credibility with the hardliners, the generals and the nationalists, who can then pursue their own dangerous (and perhaps nuclear) poker game. Watch for China and Russia to become firm allies, posing a serious threat to the West, who will start re-arming NATO.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. At a computer conference in California one of the speakers predicted that robots with AI = Artificial Intelligence, will soon outsmart us humans. He fears that they will enslave us and even kill us off. Bert wonders whether we are already slaves of our machines.

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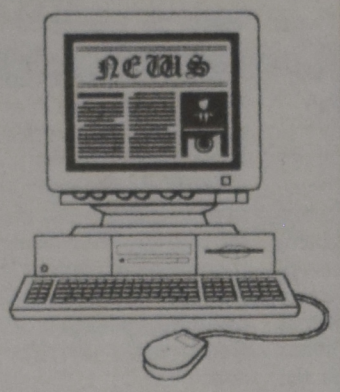

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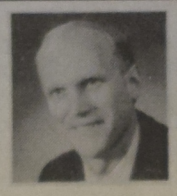

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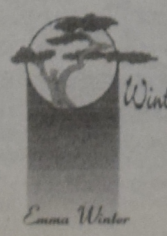

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Christian Courier's untravelled road and our Christian calling

Marian Van Til's announcement to leave C C as Managing Editor surprised me. I'm sure other readers were also taken aback by her decision to "move on" (March 20).

Marian's resignation was unexpected since she, in her editorial "Time to leave for the ride of the future" (March 6), had presented some thought-and-action-provoking insights. I appreciated her emphasis on the growing need for a greater openness shaped by "a Reformed *perspective* that appeals to a broad (ecumenical) audience; to be a vibrantly biblically 'Reformed' paper that attracts readers looking for that kind of depth and breadth."

I had hoped Marian would "stay with us for the ride to the future," especially since her diverse writings and her respectful treatment of critics showed the patience and perseverance so essential to "help us make the trip worthwhile."

Indeed, as Marian declared in her farewell editorial: "*Christian Courier* must...become more and more a relevant comfort and prodding tool for a broad spectrum of Christians who want to be both biblical and thoughtful"(March 20). God knows, our largely secularized culture urgently needs a dynamic, integrally biblical witness in all areas of life. Far too many Christians, including many churches, *spiritualize* their faith and *compartmentalize* its relevance, thus causing the very secularization they so often deplore.

Thank you, Marian, for your heart-felt prayer that "*Christian Courier* will be, more and more, a salting salt to a new generation; that it will, journalistically speaking, boldly and without hindrance preach the Kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:31). Then, God will surely bless those efforts." You are so right!

May our ever-faithful God continue to bless you deeply in all your ways with the Spirit's abiding grace and wisdom. Indeed, may Jesus' message and ministry of love and reconciliation guide and sustain you daily as you "move on" and serve God elsewhere in his Kingdom. May your journalistic service be an ongoing experience of the joy and peace which is ours in Christ Jesus, the Lord!

Enjoy a shalom-filled journey!

Gerald Vandezande
Agincourt, Ont.

The staff at CC, somewhat at a loss for words, joins with Gerald and with the readers of CC who have enjoyed and benefitted from Marian's writing and editing over the years to wish her God's blessing as she sets out on a new career. We will miss her. We already miss her.

We ask for your prayers that we may find someone with the vision and talent to replace her.

The staff at Christian Courier

Farmland and drainage

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Drainage works are essential to the business of farming. When farmable land was first cut out of the bush over 150 years ago, the next big challenge was drainage. It's been a major farm project ever since. In 1998, $70 million was spent on agricultural drainage works in Ontario alone.

So, why is the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs reviewing Ontario's farmland drainage program? OMAFRA's discussion paper points to reducing red tape and saving money — saving the government money, not the farmers.

Drainage is one of the best expenditures that farmers and governments can make. It is an essential part of our rural infrastructure.

Drainage improves productivity, generally by at least 30%, often by 40%, depending on the quality of the land. In some circumstances, like the dikes around the Holland Marsh, there was no farming until the drainage works were in place.

The benefits are many. Fieldwork can start much earlier. A longer growing season makes it possible to plant a much wider vaiety of crops. Plants are better able to make use of applied nutrients. There's less wear and tear on farm equipment on drier soils. Equipment uses less fuel. Storm water is managed better — less runs overland, taking with it soil particles and nutrients. Compaction from big machines is reduced. No-till, one of the most environmentally friendly management practices to emerge in recent decades, is dependent on well-drained soil. Without drainage the soil does not warm up quickly enough in the spring.

Drainage works are an indispensable part of our farm infrastructure. The joint efforts of farmers, municipalities and the province have resulted in a well-built network of private and public connections. OMAFRA's review should not do more than tweak its future delivery and maintenance.

COURTESY ELBERT VAN DONKERSGOED

Elbert van Donkersgoed edits **Earthkeeping Ontario** *and has been with the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Canada since 1971. The above is an abbreviated version of Corner Post, March 17, which can be heard weekly on CFCO Radio, Chatham and CKNX Radio, Wingham.*

Covenant to overcome poverty

CC Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Recently 57 leaders from a wide variety of Christian churches, many different Christian organizations and a wide spectrum of political affiliations created a coalition to organize people from various sectors in a campaign to renew efforts to eradicate poverty. They signed a "Covenant to Overcome Poverty," which calls on people of all races and denominations to work together to devote more resources to helping the poor and to create greater opportunities for them to break out of the poverty cycle.

The signers of the covenant include the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of Churches, pastors from a number of African-American churches and representatives from Roman Catholic groups. These were brought together by the work of Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine and a leader of Call to Renewal (See website: **http://www.calltorenewal.com/**).

The list of signatories also includes representatives from Bread for the World, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, World Vision, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Catholic Conference and Citizens for Public Justice.

List of moral imperatives

The leaders launched their campaign Feb 16 from the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. as a 10-year project that seeks to bring together leaders in politics, business, labor, churches and non-profit organizations to help find solutions that are non-partisan. They did draw up a list of "moral imperatives" by which to judge political candidates, among them: a living family income for all those employed, access to health care, educational opportunities, and affordable housing. The Washington launch was the first of a 16-city organizing tour across the U.S.

The following is the introduction to the Covenant, the complete text of which is carried on the Call to Renewal website.

Call to Renewal's **Covenant to Overcome Poverty:** The persistence of widespread poverty in our midst is morally unacceptable. Just as some of our religious forebears decided to no longer accept slavery or segregation, we decide to no longer accept poverty and its disproportionate impact on people of color. In the biblical tradition, we covenant together in a Call to Renewal. By entering this Covenant, we commit ourselves to:

1. Prioritize people who are poor — both in our personal, family, and vocational lives and in our congregational and organizational practices — through prayer and dedication of our time and resources.

2. Decide our financial choices in ways that promote economic opportunity and justice for those in poverty.

3. Evaluate public policies and political candidates by how they impact people who are poor.

4. Challenge racism, dismantle the structures of racial injustice and white privilege still present, and seek reconciliation among all groups in our society.

5. Nurture the bonds of family and community and protect the dignity of each person.

6. Organize across barriers of race, denomination, and social boundaries in common commitment and action to overcome poverty in our own communities, our nation, and our world.

Christians make hay to make the sun shine

MICHIGAN — Christians are helping deliver hay to mid-Atlantic farmers hurt by last year's drought. More than a dozen train carloads of hay from the upper Midwest are being delivered this month to help farmers in parts of Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, and Pennsylvania feed their livestock.

The Domestic Disaster Response group of the Lutheran Church in America is expediting the effort, the denomination said. A total of 1,500 tons of hay from Michigan will be delivered to 200 farms. More than 330 tractor-trailer loads already have been delivered to farmers in drought-stricken areas, Johanna Olson of the ELCA said. The hay has kept about 260 family farms going, she said.

When God finished man He breathed into the human form the divine life, "and man became a living soul." Man is created to be a witness and likeness of God. God and man are so near to one another that it was possible for the Eternal Word to become Man without ceasing to be God, to re-ascend to the Highest without dehumanizing the Manhood which He had assumed; so near that the believer may say in the fullest meaning of the words, "I live, yet not I, but Christ".

... John McIntyre

News

Husband and wife team aims to reclaim Biblical heritage of the arts

Michael Ireland

The husband and wife team of Dimitri and Vivienne Tsouris are promoting the Gospel through the arts. This UK-based couple is seeking to introduce the Gospel in the arts through ARTSWORLD, a means of teaching and performance. They perform with a God-inspired vision based on the account of Joshua's reclamation of the Promised Land, said Dimitri Tsouris.

Dimitri explains: "The word 'reclamation' is very significant, as the land had already been given to their forefather Abraham 400 years earlier. During Israel's absence and period of bondage in Egypt, their homeland had fallen prey to many ungodly tribes and now, under God's guidance, Joshua was given the task of reclaiming it, city by city."

Understanding the full gospel

Drawing a parallel to this story, Dimitri said God revealed to the Tsouris how the Christian church today, largely through it's dualistic attitudes and the resulting sharp divide between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' has withdrawn from social issues to the extent that most of the major disciplines of life are no longer under it's authority and indeed have slipped into the hands of unbelievers.

"Issues such as hospital care, education, social welfare, scientific research, the arts — all having been originally initiated by Bible-believing Christians — have long since been delegated to the care of humanists," he said.

Dimitri said: "The Promised Land of the Old Testament is representative of the Kingdom of God, the rule of Christ on the earth today. The cities of Jericho, Ai, etc. and others represent the disciplines of life such as politics, industry, education, medicine, the arts, religion, the family, the media etc etc. Under God's leadership believers are being raised up to go forward into 'battle' to reclaim what rightfully belongs to the Kingdom."

For Dimitri and Vivienne, whose lives have always centered around the arts, it was obvious which 'city' they were being called to. Since hearing God's call, they have been led out in many significant yet often unexpected ways, through performances, prophecy, worship, in drawing together artists /performers and especially in teaching and sharing the vision with the church.

Dimitri quotes Christian statesman Francis Schaeffer, who said: "If Christ is Lord of all of life, He is Lord of all areas of life, and *all areas equally*."

The team that makes up ARTSWORLD is comprised of Dimitri Tsouris and Vivienne Tsouris. Dimitri is an artist/arts co-ordinator/speaker, who is a board member of the Arts Centre Group in London, England, which was begun many years ago by singer Sir Cliff Richard, actor Nigel Goodwin and then BBC broadcaster, David Winter.

Dimitri is exhibiting his art in cathedrals in the south west of England with his tour of 'Contemporary Iconography'. He is a speaker to youth groups, churches, festivals and wherever there is opportunity of furthering the gift of art from God to believers and non-believers alike. Dimitri is currently doing research on "A Biblical Mandate for the Arts." He is also the co-co-ordinator for the visual and performing arts with the Cross Rhythms and Hearts on Fire Festivals.

His wife, Vivienne Tsouris, is a professional dancer and choreographer who trained at the Arts Educational School and the Rambert Ballet School. Vivienne also studied with the late Andrew Hardie of London.Through the medium of dance Vivienne gives form and expression to many issues of social concern as well as her hope for the future, which spring from her underlying Christian faith. Seminars and workshops in creative dance are also available.

Subjects included in their presentations include: relating Biblical faith to every aspect of life; teaching on what is influencing contemporary culture; understanding post-modernity, humanism, dualism; new Age; formulating a Biblical worldview — God's perspective on the world.

Their motivations are threefold: to assist Christians to better understand the beliefs and values underlying contemporary society; to study and evaluate key material both Biblical and non-Biblical in understanding a Christian response; and to assist Christians to see how the gospel should impact society and the relevance of thinking Christianly. Their purpose is to promote the Gospel through the arts.

Michael Ireland is a British freelance journalist in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A former reporter with a London newspaper, Michael is the Midwest representative of ASSIST Ministries and Senior Correspondent for ASSIST Communications of Garden Grove, CA.

Korean Chinese face North Korean refugee dilemma

CHINA (Compass) — China expects an upsurge of North Korean refugees in March and April, as snow and ice melts along mountain trails enabling more North Koreans to sneak across the border. Ethnic Korean Christians in China face unenviable risks in sheltering them. "This past year the Chinese government has cracked down on refugees," said the head of one Korean-Chinese family.

"We tried to shelter five families last year, but they were all sent back from our small town, and we heard they all died in a labor camp." The family was "sternly lectured" by Chinese police that if they sheltered any more refugees they would be fined 2,000 yuan (about two years' wages).

Official Chinese figures state that 10,000 North Korean refugees were sent back last year from China, and that there may be up to 30,000 still in China. But sources among the many Korean Chinese living near the border say the numbers are much higher. The upsurge of refugees is expected because one of the worst winters in memory has taken its toll on a flood-and-famine-devastated North Korea.

Selling souls on the Internet

SAN JOSE, Calif. (EP) - Satan may be willing to buy human souls, but he won't be able to do it through eBay. The Internet auction site recently banned a California man from selling his soul to the highest bidder. The sale was canceled before the man's asking price of $5,000 was matched by a bidder.

According to a report by Deutsche Presse-Agentur, eBay disallowed the sale because the would-be seller could not prove that he had a soul to sell. In the past, several sales of souls made it through the eBay system without being caught, and were sold for prices ranging from $1 to $10.

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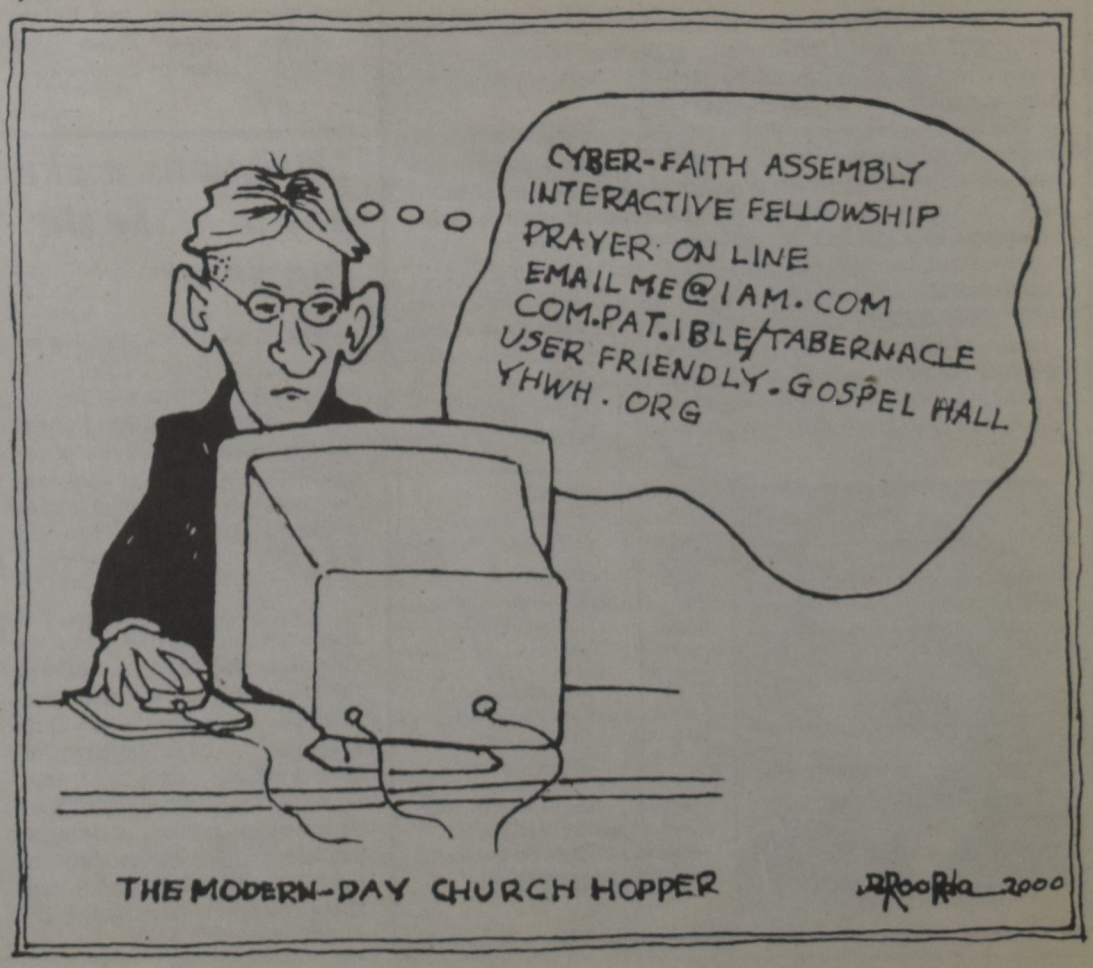

Classifieds

Classified Rates

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, eight business days prior to publication.

RATES

All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Thank You

We would like to thank all those who with visits, cards, flowers, phone calls and gifts made our 50th anniversary a day we will never forget. God has blessed us abundantly.
Love, **Itske & Nellie Veldstra.**

Personal

Widow, early 70s, Christian Reformed, would like to meet tall gentleman about same age, **east of Toronto.** I like gospel music, home life, making trips. If interested, please write to **File #2704, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines ON L2W 1A1**

Home Sweet Classifieds!

Wedding

Desiring God's will for their lives and believing that includes each other
PRISCILLA JANE MEEUWENBERG
and
DAVID WILLIAM ZEYL
will exchange their wedding vows on Saturday, the fifteenth of April, two thousand, at five o'clock in the evening, Calvin College Chapel, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Sharing their joy are Louis & Paula Meeuwenberg of Freemont, Mich. and Thom Zeyl & Aleida Zeyl-Spoelstra of Jordan, Ont.
Pastor Mary Hulst-Antonides officiating.
Future address: 340 Richard Tr. SE Apt. #2, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Anniversaries

50th Anniversary

Breukelen, the Neth. — Clinton, Ontario
1950 — 2000

"Praise the Lord
Give thanks for He is good
His love endures forever."
Psalm 106:1

With praise and thanksgiving to God, the children of
JOHN & MARIE HOOGENDOORN
invite you to celebrate with them the joyful occasion of the 50th wedding anniversary of their parents who were joined in marriage on April 4, 1950.
An Open House will be held on Saturday, May 13, 2000, from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. at the Clinton & District Christian School.
With all their love, children and grandchildren
John & Nellie
Nathan, Michael, Alissa, Janelle
Richard & Annette
Darren, Allison, Kristen
Phia & Paul
David, Steven, Bryan, Nicholas

Church Anniversaries

BETHEL CRC, BROCKVILLE, Ont.
is celebrating its
50th Anniversary
on May 27 and 28, 2000. All former members and friends of the congregation are invited for Sightseeing, Golf, Picnic, Banquet, on Saturday; commemorative a.m. service and celebrative p.m. service on Sunday. For banquet reservations and further info call Kathy VandenBerg at:
613-348-3569, or church office 613-345-2050, fax 613-342-5997, website:
http://www.recorder.ca/bethelcrc/

50th Anniversary

Drayton, Ont. CRC is celebrating its 50th Anniversary as a congregation on **June 17 and 18, 2000.** Saturday afternoon features an Open House and Saturday evening there will be an evening of memories/reflections. Sunday, June 18, we will celebrate in our two worship services with former pastors. For more information, call **519-638-3902.**

For advertising rates and info, call: 1-800-969-4636.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to John & Grace Kassies on their 50th anniversary.

Daarlerveen, Ov. — Clinton, Ont.
1950 — April 20 — 2000

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9b)
With thankfulness and praise to God, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents
JOHN & GRACE KASSIES
(nee VANDERLINDE)
Happy anniversary Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma!
May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His care for many years to come.
With love:
John & Lorie Kassies — Clinton
Martha & Dave Bricker — New Dundee
Rita & Walter Leppington — Clinton
Jerry & Dorothy Kassies — London
Ron & Trudy Kassies — Londesborough
Andy & Fran Kassies — London
Angeline & John Langendoen — Caledonia
17 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
Please join us on Thursday, April 20, 2000, from 2 - 4 p.m., the Lord willing, as we celebrate this occasion with an Open House in the Clinton Christian Reformed Church. Your presence is your gift.
Home address: 298 High St., Box 745, Clinton ON N0M 1L0

Teachers

TORONTO, Ont.:
Toronto District Christian High School invites applicants for a **Chemistry** and **Bible** teacher. These positions begin August 1, 2000. Please send a resume complete with a list of references, a transcript of university courses taken and a statement of faith to:

Ren Siebenga, TDCH
377 Woodbridge Ave.,
Woodbridge ON L4L 2S8.
E-mail: rsiebeng@tdchristian.on.ca

Accommodations

Central location in **Vineland, Ont.,** close to St. Catharines and Beamsville. Country living. Two girls looking for **two more roommates**. Call **905-563-0127, ask for Rachel.**

50th Anniversary

1950 — April 20 — 2000

Wedding text: John 2:2a
"And Jesus was also invited"
The family of
FLOOR & GERRIE SAARLOOS
(nee VAN GURP)
are grateful to the Lord for granting them 50 years together, and pray that the Lord will continue to bless them in the years to come.
Congratulations from all your children and grandchildren:
Janet & Leo Laarman
Eugene & Caroline, Julian & Tanya (Kyle), Jonathan, Rachel, Jordan, Kevin, Victor
Casper & Wilma Saarloos
Pamela, Mason, Adam
Dick & Renee Saarloos
Ben & Renee, Janelle, Valerie, David
Ida & Harry Marissen
Darryl, Amanda, Brian, Leanne
Glenna & Ron Middel
Brent, Tanya, Cameron
Graham & Janet Saarloos
Nathan, Chantelle, Christopher, Kelsey, Todd, Kassidy
Wilfred & Joanne Saarloos
Rayna, Kara, Jarrad, Mickayla, Janae
Kelvin & Rose Saarloos
Savannah, Zachary, Holleigh, Gabrielle, Quinton
Mary-Nel & Derric Bakker
Marisa, Elyssa
Amy & Bill Schaafsma
Lauren, Andrea
Alec & Elaine Saarloos
Serena, Reuben, Alanna
Please join us in celebrating this happy occasion at an Open House, April 22, 2000, at the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church, Aylmer, from 2 - 4 p.m.
Best wishes only, please.
Home address: 107 Fourth Ave., Aylmer ON N5H 2L2

Accommodation Wanted

Accommodation wanted: Single 33-year-old male, entering Redeemer in September 2000, seeks a reasonably priced apartment, or rooms with kitchen privileges, or shared accommodation, **beginning September 2000.** Prefer not more than 15 min. bike-ride from Redeemer. Am able to supply furniture. Non-smoker/non-drinker. Ian Van Leeuwen **519-291-9968** evenings 6-7 p.m. is best.

Obituaries

Enkhuizen, the Neth. — Hamilton, Ont.
Dec. 6, 1914 - Feb. 25, 2000

After a brief illness, it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself,
PETER SPOELSTRA
Devoted husband of Claire (Elgersma) Spoelstra
Loving father to:
Elizabeth Spoelstra
Ray & Shirley Spoelstra
Tena & Jerry Groen
Stuart Spoelstra
Fred & Fran Spoelstra
Paul & Henny Spoelstra
Ruth & John Hensen
Wendy & Jack Van Dyk
Peter & Dana Spoelstra
He leaves a sister, Nel Harlaar, and a brother Dirk in the Netherlands; was predeceased by a brother, Mathys, of Hungary, and a grandchild Ruth Ann.
He was loved deeply and will be sadly missed by his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Dad died peacefully at home surrounded by his wife and children.
We praise God for his legacy of faithfulness to the Lord and devotion to his family and community.
A memorial service was held on February 28, 2000 at the First Christian Reformed Church of Hamilton, Ont., where Mr. Peter Spoelstra had served faithfully as organist since 1939.
Correspondence address: 114 Juanita Dr., Hamilton ON L9C 2G3

Nov.11, 1926 - March 6, 2000

Isaiah 43:1b
The Lord called Home His child
PETER VAN RYK
dearly beloved husband of Mary van Ryk-Doekes.
He will be remembered by his nine children and their families and his sisters and brothers:
Antonia & Joop van Rijswijk — Boskoop, the Neth.
Henny Kooyman — Ontario, Calif.
Jane & Jack Verhey — Edmonton, Alta.
Laverne van Ryk — Papua, NG
Gerry & Ann van Ryk — Abbotsford, B.C.
Henk & Renie van Ryk — N.Vancouver, B.C.
Many nieces and nephews.
He was predeceased by his parents, one brother Dick and his brother-in-law Flor Kooyman.
Graveside service and memorial service took place March 10, 2000 in Edmonton, Alta.
Corresp.address:
M. van Ryk-Doekes, 120-13425 57 St., Edmonton AB T5A 2G1

Teachers

OTTAWA, Ont.:
Ottawa Christian School is interested in applications from qualified, Christian teachers for possible openings of a **full-time French** position (may be split into two part-time positions) a **part-time music** position and more time for resource. We have a school of 200+ students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade Eight.
Please submit your resume to:
Mrs. Helleman, Principal
Ottawa Christian School
2191 Benjamin Ave., Ottawa ON K2A 1P6
or fax to 613-722-5839

Classifieds

Obituaries

August 9, 1983 - March 5, 2000

...Please help us to run the race for you, dear Lord.
Thank You that you give us guidance in the ways
we should run the race in your word, the Bible.
Dear Lord, please help us not to falter while we run the race.
Thank You that you forgive us if we falter.
Thank You for that second chance by sending your Son
to die on the cross for our sins that we may be clean.
Please be with us for the rest of our lives.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

"I can do anything through Him
who gives me strength."
Philippians 4:13

— taken from Mark's prayer he wrote and his chosen text for his graduation, June 1997.

On March 5, our youngest child, brother and uncle went to be with the Lord, along with two friends, because of a tragic automobile accident.

MARK ROBERT EELKEMA

Lovingly remembered by
Parents: Menno & Effie Eelkema, RR 3, Listowel ON N4W 3G8

Brothers and sisters, nieces and nephew:
Brian & Lisa Eelkema — Thornton, Ont.
Alaina
Jacqueline & Frank Geerlinks — St. Thomas, Ont.
Emily
Selia & Fred Koops — Ingersoll, Ont.
Clair
Alice & Rick Meloche — Hamilton, Ont.
Jessica, Rebecca, Leah
Brenda Grening — London, Ont.
Zachary, Michaela
Sara & fiancé Mark Verkuyl — Woodstock, Ont.
Krista — at home — Listowel, Ont.
Grandfather Wiebren Eelkema — Listowel
Grandmother Jantje Klinker-Tamming — Strathroy
Predeceased by:
Grandmother Syke Eelkema
Grandfather Bouwe Klinker
Step-Grandfather John Tamming

The funeral service was held March 8, 2000 at Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Listowel with Pastor Jack DeVries officiating.

The family is overwhelmed by the support and expressions of sympathy during this time of deep loss and grief.

"You will go out with joy and be led forth in peace..." (Isaiah 55:12a)

On Thursday, January 27, 2000 the Lord took to himself

LAMBERTUS (BERT) HAAR

at the age of 70 years.

The Lord greatly blessed Bert, who was so strong in his faith. He will be greatly missed but it is a comfort to know he is in his Father's loving arms. Praise the Lord!

He is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Dini, and by his children, their spouses and his grandchildren:
Wilma & Martin DeRuyter — Smithers, B.C.
Melanie, Valerie
Martin & Rose Haar — Smithers, B.C.
Kimberley, Ashley, Christopher, Michelle, Michael, Allan
Edward & Debbie Haar — Smithers, B.C.
Kiana, Jesse
Bert & Anna Haar — Houston, B.C.
Laura
Marian & Kevin Debree — Lacombe, Alta.
Samantha, Alexandra

The memorial service was held on January 31, 2000 in the Smithers CRC. Pastor Jim Poelman officiated.

Corresp.address:
Box 923, Smithers BC V0J 2N0

It pleased the Lord to take home on March 11, 2000, our dearly loved Mother, Oma and great-Oma, at the age of almost 93 years.

GEERTJE ENGELINA PIJPKER - UBELS

Dearly loved wife of the late Taeke Pijpker.

Predeceased by daughters-in-law Joyce and Winnie.

Dear mother of:
Ralph & Margaret
Engelina & Klaas
Grant & Jean
Johanna & Jack

Dear Oma to 15 grandchildren; dear great-Oma to 24 great-grandchildren.

Memorial service was held on March 14, 2000, at Holland Christian Homes. Interment at Meadowvale Cemetery, Brampton.

Correspondence address:
Ralph Pypker, 30 Scugog St., Bowmanville ON L1C 3H6

Opportunities

The Kentville (Nova Scotia) CRC is seeking a **Director of Music Ministries** to serve as primary accompanist, lead and organize choirs and provide leadership in blending traditional and contemporary worship. For a job description, contact Wendy La Pierre at **902-542-1663** or **WendyLaPierre@Yahoo.com**

Vacations

CHRISTIAN FAMILY RESORT

We are a small clean Family Resort, located on beautiful Lime Stone Lake, **30 km north of Parry Sound** on Highway 124. The two-bedroom cottages are situated close to the lake and have south/western exposure. Prices range from $285. to $400. a week.

For more information phone: (not on Sundays) **905-304-6250** or during the season: **705-389-2265.**

Obituaries

Marum, Gr. Bradenton, Fl.
1932 2000

In the midst of life, living joyfully and faithfully, suddenly the Lord called home

JOHN E. TOP

Your ways are higher than ours,
O Lord,
Your thoughts far above our thinking.

Lovingly remembered by his wife of 42 years, Hennie
and by his children:
Ed Top & Michelle Gritter
Pat & Betty Panza
Bernie Top (1963-1969†)
Bruce & Sharon Gritter
Andrew & Sue Top
Missed by his grandchildren:
David, Michael and Julie Panza
Travis, Connor, Evan and Janessa Gritter.
His sisters:
Eno & Hilda Jansma
Tony & Tina Alblas
His uncle Melle Haan and his aunts Piet & Trini Tysma, Willem & Aske Braam.

There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Funeral service was led by Pastor N. Overduin. Graveside words spoken by Rev. P. Kranenburg.

The Lord called him home on February 15, 2000.

Correspondence address:
H. Top, 35 Kingknoll Dr, K.T.1103, Brampton ON L6Y 5G5

July 8, 1910 - February 13, 2000

"How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." (Psalm 84:1,2)

JOHN (JAN) VANDER STOEP

recently of Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, formerly of Burlington, Ont., loving husband of the late Joanne (Johanna) Zegwaard, was promoted to greater glory.

Dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather of:
Hans & Alice
Laura & Rick Veenstra, (Heather, Amy, Christine, Michael)
John & Carol (Erin, Kristin, Meghan)
Stephen & Mary
Henry & Trixie
Michael, Brian, David
Sherry & Harmen Huisman (Jacob, Jessica, Stephanie, Samantha)
Roger & Henrietta
Robert
Ida & Albert Vander Veen
David
Lisa & Gerry Dawn (Alexandra)
Grant
John & Bonnie
Kristen & Jason VanHerwynen (Savannah)
Ken & Cathy

Predeceased by a great-granddaughter and his younger brother Peter.

Survived by three sisters May, Clazina and Willy.

The funeral took place February 15, 2000 at Bethel CRC, Waterdown, Rev. Erick Schuringa officiating.

Correspondence address:
970 Bonnieview Ave., Burlington ON L7T 1T5

Anniversary

With grateful thanks to God, we are proud to announce the 45th anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

GERRY & RIET VAN EYK
(nee LEUTSCHER)

on April 1, 2000.

We pray that the Lord will continue to lead and guide you.

With love from your family:
Sylvia & William van Wyngaarden
Bethany, Mallory
Elaine and Dirk van Wyngaarden
Adam, Lucas, Karen
Peter

Home address: 356 Avondale St., Brantford, ON N2S 4L7

Birthday

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness."

By God's grace,

JENNIFER TIMMERMANS

turns 80 on April 16, 2000.

Having suffered a stroke a year ago, she is faithfully cared for at home by her loving husband, Andrew.

She dearly misses her son, Bruce (1943-1998).

Our prayer for our Mom and Grandma is that God continue to sustain you and surround you with His love!

Cathy & Cye
Karen & Erik (Carmen), Steve, Barbara
Mient & Harriet
Christina & Steve (Joshua, Jonah), Mike, Matthew
Tina & Eckard
Omar & Bess, Sye, Niiba

Address: 2297 Prospect Ave, Ottawa ON K1H 7G2

Teachers

WELLANDPORT, Ont.:
Wellandport Christian School invites applications for 2000-2001 school year for:

- possible openings in the junior division
- possible part-time openings in French, Music and Art.

Direct enquiries to:

W. Thies, Principal
Wellandport Christian School
84008 Wellandport Rd.
Wellandport ON L0R 2J0
Phone:905-386-6272
Fax: 905-386-7184

Miscellaneous

The Bible and Islam

by Rev. Bassam Madany

($5.95 Canada/$4.95 U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

Teachers

BARRIE, Ont.:
Timothy Christian School, Barrie, welcomes resumes from qualified Christian teachers for **possible vacancies across the elementary** panel. If you're excited about sharing faith and learning with children, please direct your resume to:

Timothy Christian School
att. Mrs, Jane Tjeerdsma
49 Ferris Lane, Barrie ON L4M 2Y1
e-mail: tcs@barint.on.ca

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.:
Durham Christian High School invites applications from teachers with concentrations in:

History, Boys P.E., Girls P.E., Sciences, French

for openings effective August 1, 2000. Please send letter of application, resume, references, transcripts and statement of philosophy of education to

Fred Spoelstra, Principal
Durham Christian High School
340 Scugog St., Bowmanville ON
L1C 3K2
Fax 905-623-6258
e-mail: dchs@ican.net

NEWMARKET, Ont.:
Holland Marsh District Christian School, Newmarket, Ont., has **possible openings** in the primary, junior and intermediate grades. Please send your resume including statement of faith and philosophy of education to:

Mr. Henry Lise, Principal
18955 Dufferin St., RR 2,
Newmarket ON L3Y 4V9
www.neptune.on.ca/~hmdcs
Fax: 905-775-2395;
e-mail: hmdcs@neptune.on.ca

OAKVILLE, Ont.:
Oakville Christian School requires an upper elementary **part-time French teacher** for September 2000. Please send your resume to the **Principal, OCS, 112 Third Line, Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6**

TORONTO, Ont.:
Willowdale Christian School invites applications for a definite **primary teaching position effective September 2000.** Candidates with a CSTC will be given preference. **"Math Their Way"** familiarity will also be appreciated. Please send resumes including a statement of philosophy of education to:

Mrs. C. Bootsma, Principal
Willowdale Christian School
60 Hilda Dr.
North York ON M2M 1V5
phone: 416-222-1711
fax: 416-222-1939

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Classifieds

Teachers

HAMILTON, Ont.:
Hamilton District Christian High School requires one teacher for the **Accounting & Business** program. Abilities in related subject areas are also valued.
Please respond in writing and send to:
Mr. Jim Vanderkooy, Principal
92 Glancaster Rd.
Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
or e-mail:jvanderkooy@hdch.org

WYOMING, Ont.:
John Knox Christian School has a possible opening at the upper elementary level. This will be a split grade classroom. Please send resume and philosophy of education to:
Mrs. Margaret Noorloos,
Chairperson of the Education Committee
RR 1, Wyoming ON N0N 1T0.
phone: 519-542-8614
fax: 519-542-8614

MAPLE RIDGE, B.C.:
Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School in Maple Ridge is now accepting resumes for the following positions:
- Full-time and part-time **senior High School** positions with strengths in **Math, Science, Socials, Drama, French and Music.**
- Full-time **grade 3 position**, part-time **High School Librarian** for grades 8-11 and part-time **Special Needs Aide.**

Full resumes with Christian Philosophy of Education and references can be directed to:
Rod Berg
Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School
12140 - 203 Street, Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4V5
Phone: 604-465-4442
Our school offers a K-10 program to 300 students and is presently expanding into grades 11 and 12 over the next two years. We have been providing Christian Education to the Maple Ridge area for the past 43 years. We are located 40 minutes East of Vancouver on the North side of the Fraser River.

SMITHERS, B.C.:
Bulkley Valley Christian School in Smithers, B.C. invites applications to fill the following openings for the 2000-2001 school year: **Kindergarten and Grade 7.** (French or music experience would be an asset for the Gr. 7 position). There are also possible openings in **Grades 2 and 3 at the high school level (Math, Science, Socials and English).**
Bulkley Valley Christian School is an interdenominational school offering Christian education to approximately 410 students in K-12. Please send letter of application, resume, and philosophy of Christian education to:
Bulkley Valley Christian School
John Bronsema, Principal
PO Box 3635
Smithers BC V0J 2N0
Phone: 250-847-4238
Fax: 250-847-3564

Emmanuel Christian School

Is inviting applications for the position of:

Principal

We are an English language, interdenominational Christian school (K – 11) serving the Christian community in the Montreal (Quebec) area for twenty-five years. We receive government funding and offer a fully accredited curriculum including a bilingual program at the primary level and French options at the secondary level to 320 students.

The ideal candidate will have a passion for Christian education and have proven skills in Spiritual, Instructional, Staff and Student leadership. Proficiency in the French language would be an asset.

Please forward your resume, a personal statement of your faith and philosophy of Christian education to:

Fred Horst - Chairman of the Search Committee
4294 Graham Drive, Pierrefonds, Quebec
H9H 2B6
Tel: (514) 620-9528

Christ Community Church of Victoria, on Vancouver Island, in southwestern B.C is seeking a

full-time Pastor

(May consider part-time applicants.)

CCC is one of two C.R.C. churches in Victoria with 128 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package please contact:

H. DeGroot c/o
Christ Community Church,
3897 Holland Ave.,
Victoria B.C. V8Z 5K2
ph: (250) 658-0052
fax: (250) 479-3297 Or
e-mail: jdegroot@uvic.ca.

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- **North Toronto**
- **East Toronto, incl. Pickering/Ajax**

Independent, self-motivated persons whould fax resume to: 905-335-2981, indicating sales experience, as well as territory being applied for.
Capital investment and own truck required.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPENING

Jarvis District Christian School invites applications for a **possible principal position** effective September, 2000. JDCS is located 40 minutes south of Hamilton, Ontario, near Lake Erie. We have a student population of 195 students and a staff of 11 teachers. Interested persons are requested to send their letter of application, resume, philosophy of education and statement of faith to:

Mr. Ted Berkel, Board Chairman
223-14th St., R.R. #4,
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4K3
Telephone: 519-426-2628

CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TERRACE, B. C. TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Centennial Christian School invites applications from committed, Christian educators to fill openings for the 2000/2001 school year in the following areas:

Primary: **Grade 3**
Intermediate: **Grade 4, Grade 7**
High School: **Grade 8 - (2 positions)**
Humanities focus (Bible, English, Socials)
Grades 9-11 openings in:
English, Socials, Math

These positions may also involve teaching duties in other areas. Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school and presently offers Christian education to approximately 235 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. The addition of Grades 11 (Sept. 2000) and 12 (Sept. 2001) is being planned. This has created possible new openings as stated above. Please contact the principal or vice principal for further details and send letter of application, resume and other pertinent information to:

Centennial Christian School
Frank Voogd - Principal
Curtis Tuininga - Vice Principal
3608 Sparks Street
Terrace, B. C.
V8G 2V6
Phone: (250) 635-6173
Fax: (250) 635-9385

Part-time Youth Worker

Do you have training or experience in youth ministry?
Are you connected to contemporary culture?
Do you relate well to teenagers?

First Christian Reformed Church in Kingston, located in the beautiful Thousand Islands area of Lake Ontario, could use your help. Our congregation is looking for a part-time youth worker to assist in developing our youth ministries. Several programs are already established and growing, but we're looking for additional expertise and support to enhance them. First CRC has a sizeable number of children under 18 years of age, and this new position is part of our commitment to develop their faith and life within the Christian community.

Would you like a part-time job that will help to change the world?
Sound interesting?
Call us at (613) 542-8350 for a complete position description.
Or forward your resume to us at:
Fax: (613) 542-7811
Email: 1stcrc@kos.net
Conventional mail: 310 Kingscourt Ave., Kingston, ON K7K 4R3.

Classifieds

Teachers

JARVIS, Ont.:
Jarvis District Christian School invites applications for **possible openings**, effective September, 2000.
* A full-time Grade 2 position
* A full-time combined Grade 3/4 position
* A full-time Grade 8 position with some rotation into Grade 7

Strengths in the areas of French, Music, and the ability to be the lead computer person for the school would be a real asset. JDCS is located 40 minutes south of Hamilton, Ontario near Lake Erie.
Please send your letter of application, resume and statement of philosophy of education to:

Garry Glasbergen, Principal
Jarvis District Christian School
Box 520
Jarvis ON N0A 1J0
Phone: 519-587-4444
Fax: 519-587-2985

LONDON, Ont.:
Due to an increase in enrolment, **London District Christian Secondary School** invites applications for a possible **science/math** position and **possibly another area as well**.
Please send a letter of application, a resume with a list of references, a transcript, and a statement of faith to:

Henry Kooy, LDCSS
24 Braesyde Ave.
London ON N5W 1V3
phone: 519-455-4360
fax: 519-455-4364
e-mail: office@ldcss.on.ca

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Christian School, approximately 383 students in K-9, located in central Alberta invites applications from qualified teachers for a **primary grade school teacher**. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume to:

Martin Folkerts
Lacombe Christian School
5206 58 Street
Lacombe AB T4L 1G9
phone: 403-782-6531
fax: 403-782-5760

You Are Invited to the
40th Anniversary Celebration of
CALVIN MEMORIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
(St. Catharines, ON)
Saturday, May 6, 2000
"Blessings Remembered"

1:30 OPEN HOUSE at CMCS (in the "new" gym)
3:30 Service of Celebration (Rev. John Suk, speaker)
5:00 Soup and Bun Supper

Please call CMCS at 905-937-6302 for more information about this special day!

Social Service Work

Become a part of our team of committed professionals providing loving care for needy children.

Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group foster homes in the Niagara peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties is searching for the following as part of its recent expansion:

RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE WORKERS.
Related educational background is an asset. Competitive salary and benefits. This live-in position provides opportunities for out-of-province candidates.

Please contact Randy Klassen at:
Mutual Support Systems
P.O. Box 397
Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0
phone: 905-892-4332
e-mail: rklassen@mutualsupport.net
Visit us at:
http://www.mutualsupport.net

Lambton Christian School Society - Sarnia
Nestled in beautiful Sarnia-Lambton in close proximity to Lake Huron, the St. Clair Parkway and the United States, we are a thriving Christian community with a vision to serve the broader Christian community and secure new facilities. We are looking for teachers who demonstrate a love and commitment to Jesus Christ, a passion for discipling young people in their Christian walk and thought, and an exuberance for the subject matter and life long learning.

Sarnia Christian School - Applications are sought for a senior elementary position.
Lambton Christian High School - Applications are sought for definite positions in health and physical education and science. Applications are sought for possible positions in history, English and mathematics. The ability to teach art, music or drama and the ability to coach athletics would be considered an asset.

Please send your application packages
(resume, statement of faith, philosophy of Christian education)
in confidence to the appropriate principal:

Paul Wiersma, Principal
Lambton Christian High School
295 Essex Street
Sarnia, ON N7T 4S3
phone: 519-337-9122
fax: 519-337-2541
e-mail:lch@tct.net

Pete Weening, Principal
Sarnia Christian School
1273 Exmouth Street
Sarnia, ON N7S 1W9
phone: 519-383-7750
fax: 519-383-6304
e-mail:scs@tct.net

ONTARIO CHRISTIAN MALE CHORUS ASSOCIATION

IN CONCERT
featuring
Seven male choruses from Southwestern Ontario

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2000
7:30 p.m.

London Gospel Temple
288 Commissioners Rd W
London, Ontario

Tickets $10
Call John VanderGeest at 519-631-5258
or
George Bayne at 519-537-7070

First Victoria Christian Reformed Church
in the capital city of beautiful British Columbia
is seeking a
FULL-TIME PASTOR

to provide sound biblical preaching that has a motivating effect on the youth of today, as well as the youth of yesterday. In addition, the pastor will provide leadership in worship, church education and pastoral care. The church has 240 professing and 80 non-professing members who enjoy a variety of worship expressions. Pastors interested in a potential call are encouraged to submit their resumes. A church profile is available.

Please contact:
Gerry Ensing, Search Committee Chair
c/o First Christian Reformed Church, 661 Agnes Street
Victoria, BC, V8Z 2E7, CANADA
Telephone: 250-479-5124; Fax: 250-479-0899;
home phone 250-727-0248; e-mail: gensing@telus.net

The East Strathroy CRC congregation
thankfully announces the
Grand Opening of our new Sanctuary
The Lord willing we will celebrate this on
Saturday, April 8, 2000
with an Open House from 2 - 4 p.m. and official opening ceremonies at 7 pm and on
Sunday, April 9, 2000
with a Dedication Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

April 1	Ancaster Praise Choir - Fundraising Concert at Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd E (formerly Hwy #53), **Ancaster**, Ont. Free admission, freewill offering. For info. call 905-524-0866.
April 1	Ontario Christian Music Assembly"s 39th Annual Spring Concert, King Street United Church, 100 King St., **Trenton**, Ont. 8 p.m. (See display ad for ticket info.)(#)
April 5-8	Frisian Entertainment, Anneke Douma (singer); Willem Roersma (trumpet); **Apr.5**- Knox Chr. School, **Bow manville**; **Apr.6**- Jarvis Distr. Chr. School, **Jarvis**; **Apr.7**-Strathroy Comm. Chr. School, **Strathroy; Apr.8**-Tillsonburg Comm. Centre, **Tillsonburg**. See ad for details. All performances 7:30 p.m. Admission $ 10.
April 7, 8, 13, 14, 15	Students of **London** District Christian Secondary School present **The Giveaways**. 8 p.m.(See ad)
April 8	Ontario Christian Music Assembly"s 39th Annual Spring Concert, Bethel CRC, 606 Dundas St. (Hwy. 5 & Kerns Rd.), **Waterdown**, Ont. 8 p.m. (See display ad for ticket info.)(#)
April 15	Ontario Christian Music Assembly"s 39th Annual Spring Concert, St. John's United Church, 56 Victoria St. E., **Alliston,** Ont. (See display ad for ticket info.)(#)
April 15	Annual Choir Festival of Reformed Churches at 7:30 p.m. at **Drayton** CRC. Mass choir of about 150 people along with the Master's Voice Players will present an Easter Cantata "In the Presence of the Lamb." Free-will offering at the door.
April 16	Rosedale Baptist Church, 11 Rosedale Pl. (off Lincoln St. E.), **Welland**, Ont. - Choir presents Easter Cantata, "We Have Seen the Lord," at 7 p.m.(#)
April 29	Ontario Christian Male Chorus concert - London Gospel Temple, **London**, 7:30 p.m. (See display ad for ticket info.)(#)
April 30	Dutch Service - Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, 3 p.m., Rev. John Hellinga. (#)
May 6	40th Anniversary Calvin Memorial Chr. School, **St.Catharines,** for info call 905-937-6302.
May 20	Retirement Celebration Pastor Jack & Jennie Quartel, Clinton Chr. School, **Clinton;** dinner 5:30 p.m. program 7:30 p.m.
May 27, 28	50th Anniversary **Brockville** CRC. For info call Kathy VandenBerg 613-348-3569, or Church office at 613-345-2050.
June 17-18	50th Anniversary **Drayton** CRC. For info call 519-638-3902.
July 11-13	Coffee Break/Story Hour Convention, **Grand Rapids,** Mich. Register by April 15. See ad.

WITH THANKFULNESS TO GOD
WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US
FOR THE
RETIREMENT CELEBRATION OF
PASTOR JACK & JENNIE QUARTEL
ON
SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2000 at the
CLINTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
243 Princess St. E., Clinton.

Dinner served at 5:30 p.m. Cost $15.00.
Program to follow at 7:30 p.m.
Please RSVP by April 28th to:
Harry Sjaarda
RR#6, Goderich, Ont. N7A 3Y3
Phone: 519-524-5534

Following 45 years of faithful service, they will officially retire on May 21st, 2000, at the 10:00 a.m. worship service at
Trinity Christian Reformed Church,
321 Suncoast Dr., Goderich.
You are invited to join us.
Call Harry for more information or for hotel accommodation.

Spring Concerts of Praise

by the
Choirs, concert band & Kooij Sisters
of the
Ontario Christian Music Assembly
under the direction of ***Leendert Kooij***
with ***Andre Knevel*** *at the organ*
ADMISSION: *Adults $10.00 Students $6.00*
Children under 12 - FREE

April 1	April 8	April 15
King St. United	Bethel Chr. Ref.	St.John's United
TRENTON	WATERDOWN	ALLISTON
(613) 392-5274	(905) 689-7796	(705) 435-6522

For all concerts call OCMA Toronto (416) 636-9779

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Coffee Break / Story Hour Convention 2000

Coffee Break Small Groups

Story Hour Little Lambs

Sparkling in His land

If you've ever wondered what Coffee Break is all about, come find out!

Join women from across the United States and Canada at the Coffee Break/Story Hour Convention in Downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan

July 11-13, 2000

Register by April 15

Over forty breakout sessions designed to help women share God's love with their neighbors and co-workers.

Find out more:
www.crcna.org
616-224-5893 or
1-888-644-0814

Presenters include: Lynn Austin • Bill Fay • Tim Brown • Annie Herring • Debbie Holley • Ray Vander Laan • Lee Strobel • Betty Veldman

News

'Christian Oscars' honor the best of 1999's Hollywood

Dan Wooding and Matthew P. Kinne

HOLLYWOOD, CALIF. — As an alternative to the Academy Awards, the eighth Annual MOVIEGUIDE Awards Gala, also known as the "Christian Oscars," was held on March 15, at the Hilton Universal Hotel in Universal City, Calif.

Before an audience of stars, celebrities, filmmakers, and major studio executives, *The Winslow Boy* (Sony Pictures), won the prestigious $25,000 Epiphany Prize for the Most Inspiring Movie of 1999.

The Epiphany Prize for the Most Inspiring Television Program of 1999 was given to an episode of JAG called "Second Sight" (CBS, Bellisario Productions).

The John Templeton Foundation sponsors the two $25,000 cash prizes each year to the best movie and network television program that is "spiritually uplifting, inspiring and results in a great increase in man's love of God or man's understanding of God."

DAN WOODING

Chuck Norris (centre) accepts a Grace Prize for television.

Grace prizes

Two veteran actors, Richard Farnsworth and Chuck Norris, each received the Grace Prize for the most inspirational performances in movies and television. Farnsworth took the movie award for his title role in *The Straight Story* (Disney), and action star Chuck Norris took the Grace Prize for television for his role in the "A Matter of Faith" episode of *Walker, Texas Ranger* (CBS).

Farnsworth is the oldest man to receive a best actor Oscar nomination. He revealed that he turns down a lot of work because he doesn't care for movies filled with "sex, violence and four-letter words."

Norris, whose TV program received the Epiphany Prize two years ago for an episode about the need for salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, related that his show decided to produce a couple of Christian spiritual dramas each year.

Jesus film honored

The *Jesus* film was given a special Faith & Values commendation for extraordinary technical and evangelistic achievement. In presenting the award to Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ, the organization behind the *Jesus* film, Pat Boone told the audience that more people had seen the film "than any other movie in history." Pat Boone went on, "This movie, originally made for and released by Warner Bros., has been seen by 3.3 billion people in 566 different languages."

A clip was shown of Larry King speaking on a special Christmas release of the *Jesus* film in which celebrities talk about Jesus. "As a talk-show host," King said, "I have nothing but the greatest and most profound respect for Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He was, after all, Jewish; born Jewish, died Jewish. Jesus Christ was the greatest single individual of both millennia and He had the most profound effect on mankind of any individual ever born. If there were one person I would like to interview, it would be Jesus."

Other Faith & Values Awards included a special documentary award, a special distributor award and the Clay Turner Award. Valerie Red-Horse, the co-director, star and producer of *Naturally Native*, an inspirational movie about faith, family and culture, was given a special lithograph of mouth artist Clay Turner's "Horse Trading at Big Prairie" for her fine work in that movie.

Red-Horse said MOVIEGUIDE honors both Jesus and her Native American ancestors with this award. She said she refused to make her movie more "edgy" and sensational to please secular distributors. She added that she's extremely grateful for the award because it's important for MOVIEGUIDE to continue honoring Christian movies like *Naturally Native*. Her movie was also one of the nominees for the Epiphany Prize.

Day of Discovery won the documentary award for its three-part video, *The Eric Liddell Story*. This documentary tells "the rest of the story" about the Olympic runner and Christian missionary from the Oscar-winning movie *Chariots of Fire* who refused to run on Sunday.

Good guys finish first

During the ceremony, Dr. Ted Baehr, founder of MOVIEGUIDE, presented his Report to the Entertainment Industry. "Good guys finish first," he told the audience. "Movies with good content do much better at the box offices than others. The myth is that bad guys finish first, but if you look at the top grossing films, you will see that that is not true.

"Even last year, when I expected this not to be true, movies with strong moral content had an average of $209 million in the top 25 films. The top 25 films were not made up of the Academy Award nominees, but rather of films that people went to see in spite of the fact that the newspapers, and everybody else, were hyping movies like *Cider House Rules*, which had only made $23 million when it was nominated, while *Toy Story 2*, which the newspapers ignored, posted $300 million."

Dr. Baehr also noted, "We are not here to annoy or to confront you in Hollywood, but rather to commend you for doing movies that reflect the faith and values of the large church-going community. All the movies that we honored this year had strong elements that reflected the faith and values of the Christian community. Some of them were quite extraordinary."

Dr. Baehr presented several other interesting facts about the box office figures for movies released in 1999. For example, the more sex, nudity and foul language a movie had, the less it earned. Movies that completely met MOVIEGUIDE's moral and spiritual standards earned eight times more than those movies which had an anti-Christian, evil or false worldview.

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Jun	19-22	699	659	559
Jun	26-29	739	689	599
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News Digest

Funeral business dying

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – The American funeral industry, which was once highly profitable, is suffering, as large funeral chains struggle to pay for their overpriced acquisitions, reports the *Globe and Mail*. "To top it off, people are simply living longer," states the paper, quoting the Los Angeles Times. "The U.S. death rate has crept fractionally lower in the last five years. Houston-based SCI, the industry's largest chain, blamed its sagging fortunes in part on potential clients not dying as soon as projected."

Billboards from heaven

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (Religion Today) – Billboards with snappy one-liners signed "God" are coming back, this time aimed at teenagers. Clever, terse lines such as "What part of 'Thou Shalt Not' didn't you understand?" emerged on 10,000 billboards in 40 states last year. The $25 million, non-denominational campaign, called God Speaks, was funded by an anonymous donor and produced by the Smith Agency of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Thousands of new billboards began showing up in 17 states on March 13, the Smith Agency said. The campaign, called Wuzup, God?, will show God speaking in hip language, Steve Rice of the agency told the *Washington Times*. "These messages show God speaking with kids in their own language, not at them."

Last year's ad campaign was covered by broadcast and cable news networks, major newspapers, and religious magazines, and won an OBIE advertising award. A group of ministers called the campaign "the finest in drive-by evangelism."

Aretha Franklin Rule

LOUISIANA — Instead of "the three Rs," some American schools are teaching "the four Rs," including Respect, which has inspired the nickname: "The Aretha Franklin Rule." Classes on manners in several states are promoting civility. For instance, in Louisiana, a law requires students to address their teachers as "sir" or ma'am." Such legislation is widely approved, reports the *Globe and Mail*, in a synopsis taken from the *Washington Post*. But one Louisiana official of the American Civil Liberties Union calls his state's law another wrongheaded move toward "a totalitarian society."